

**The Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis**  
**An iconographic analysis with special emphasis on the**  
**identification**  
**and function of the gift-bearing delegations**

by

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## ABSTRACT

For many years, specific delegations on the façades of the Apadana at Persepolis posed an ongoing identification problem among scholars. Incongruities occurred in the identification of some of the groups – labelled Problem Groups in the current study. An attempt was made to try and solve the identification problem of specific delegations. It was necessary to look at the context in which these groups occurred, e.g., their physical world as well as their natural environment.

The reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadana was used in this study because they are still in a reasonably acceptable state. The combined iconographic analysis method (Panofsky/Keel), as well as comparisons, were used to try and find a solution for the identification problem in the Problem Groups.

After a detailed analysis and comparative research, the identification problem of the Problem Groups still evades answers except for one group.

A totally different approach to the solving of the identification problem was suggested, and this deserves some attention from future scholars.

Key words: Persepolis; Reliefs; Apadana; Problem Groups; iconographic analysis.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my granddaughter, Elanij Swart, who for many years has been sharing my interest in the life and times of ancient cultures.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

In the history of Persia, the Achaemenid Period (550-330 BCE) saw the establishment of the largest empire of that time (Briant, 2002; Wiesehöfer, 2001). This empire stood between the highly civilised Mesopotamian empires, the Elamite civilisation and the nomadic tribes of Iran. The combination of these influences resulted in the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus II (559-530 BCE) was the founder of this empire. He conquered many peoples, tribes and nations. Finally, the reign of Darius I (522-486 BCE) encompassed the Achaemenid Persian Empire at the height of its territorial extent (Waters, 2014:5).

Darius I initiated the construction of Persepolis, which became one of the four capital cities.<sup>1</sup> The exact date of the commencement of the building programme is unclear. Different scholars give different dates (cf. Chart 3.1). It is necessary to note where Persepolis was situated and what the reason was for the planning and building of such a large complex in which the Apadana,<sup>2</sup> with its reliefs, was just one of the buildings. What was the reason for or function of a complex of this magnitude?

With the advice of experts, Darius I was responsible for the initial planning of some of the buildings like the main palace and the ‘harem’ at Persepolis. His son, Xerxes (486-465 BCE), completed these buildings and his grandson and successor, Artaxerxes I (465/4-425 BCE), finished the Hall of Hundred Columns (Throne Hall) and built his own palace.

In 330 BCE, Persepolis was razed by fire at the hands of Alexander the Great. Ruins were all that remained, and Persepolis became a forgotten city. However, a visit to the terrain was documented by Odoric of Pordenone as early as 1318 CE. From the 17<sup>th</sup> until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century CE, travellers from different parts of the world visited the ruins and gave a variety of interpretations of the site (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1991; cf. Table 3.4). The different interpretations regarding the ruins of Persepolis and especially the reliefs form part of the present research.

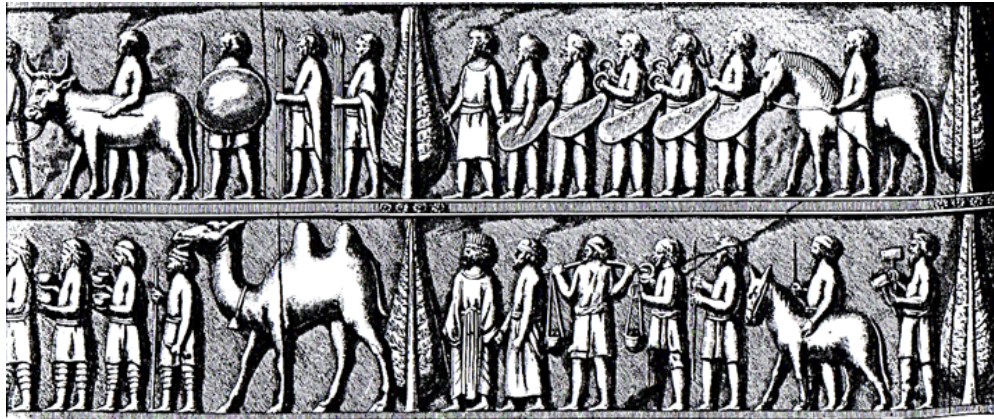
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<sup>1</sup> Ecbatana, Susa, Pasargadae, and Persepolis (Shahbazi & Bosworth, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> The Old Persian word is usually applied to the large, multi-columned halls of the palaces and served as the public part of a royal palace and was used as an audience hall (Hornblower et al., 2012:114).

## 1.2 HISTORY OF RESEARCH

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Cornelis de Bruyn (1711), a Dutch artist, saw the procession of the twenty-three delegations (cf. Fig. 1.1) of the empire as the portrayal of Nowruz.<sup>3</sup>



**Fig. 1.1 Detail of part of the Apadana Relief (Sancisi-Weerdenburg & Drijvers, 1991:183)**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, archaeologists like Herzfeld (1931-1934) and Schmidt (1935-1939) started scientific excavations at Persepolis (Tilia, 1977:67). Herzfeld discovered the reliefs on the eastern staircase of the Apadana that were buried under sand. They were in a much better state than those on the northern staircase, a mirror image of the eastern staircase, but more exposed to the elements and damaged and pilfered by visitors through the centuries. Herzfeld also regarded the reliefs of the twenty-three delegations as a depiction of Nowruz festivities (cf. Ghirshman, 1964:154; Walser, 1966:20). Later, the French and British had teams of archaeologists on the site. Slowly but surely, archaeologists, historians, and art historians rediscovered Persepolis with its various buildings and reliefs in different locations like stairways and door jambs. The rediscovery of Persepolis re-awakened the interest in the identification of the human figures on the *Apadana Reliefs* and their purpose and function.

In 1957, Ghirshman and Pope each published an article about the building project at Persepolis— virtually at the same moment and independently of each other — which gave different grounds and for varying reasons. They stated that the original reason for a building project of this magnitude at Persepolis was exclusively for a ceremonial purpose. They both agreed that one of the ceremonies was the Nowruz festivities (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1991:173). Serious objections have been voiced against such deduction by scholars like Nylander (1974:150), Root (1979:156), and Calmeyer (1980:55). Sancisi-Weerdenburg

<sup>3</sup> Nowruz: Near Eastern practices and rituals relating to the change of seasons during the March equinox (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1991:173). De Bruyn called it 'het feest van het Nieuwe Zonnejaer' (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1991:185). The bringing of gifts during this time is still practised in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in present-day Iran (Personal experience, March 2013).

(1991:196) and Jacobs (2020) argued strongly against the Nowruz interpretation. There is still no consensus amongst scholars about the purpose and functions or the identification of some of the people in the *Apadana Reliefs*.

Tilia (1977:69-73) and Root (1979:88) argued that the present central panel, which is still *in situ*, was a replacement (cf. Strawn, 2008:92). In 1936, two big reliefs, representing a royal audience scene, were discovered in the Treasury, and they are regarded as the original central panels on the northern and eastern sides (cf. Fig. 1.2). The magnificent original central panel of the Apadana (north façade) can now be viewed in the National Museum in Tehran.



**Fig. 1.2 Remains of the original Audience scene on the northern façade (Shahbazi, 2013:84)**

On the North wing of the inner staircase of the Eastern façade, a stout garrison of the ‘Immortals’ (the imperial guard), was depicted as well as soldiers, grooms, horses, royal chariots and dignitaries of the empire. On the South wing of the inner staircase of the eastern façade, twenty-three delegations are depicted (cf. Briant, 2002:173 inscription DB).<sup>4</sup>

For the identification of the different groups, several criteria were used by scholars. Walser (1966) gave by far the most comprehensive description of the delegations, with particular emphasis on their clothing and the gifts they were bearing. He also took geographical areas, from which they hailed, as a criterion during the identification process.

Walser (1966:102) presented his own identification list of the twenty-three delegations depicted on the eastern Apadana stairway (cf. Table 1.1). He also included the identification lists of the following researchers in the table: Junge (1941), Herzfeld (1968), Schmidt (1953), and Barnett (1957).

<sup>4</sup> The enumeration of the subject peoples of the empire varied from 23-31 (Briant, 2002:173).



**Table 1.1 Identification suggestions for the twenty-three groups of tribute bearers by different scholars (Walser, 1966:102)**

	<b>Junge 1941</b>	<b>Herzfeld 1948</b>	<b>Schmidt 1953</b>	<b>Barnett 1957</b>	<b>Walser 1966</b>
I	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes
II	Elamites	Elamites	Elamites	Elamites	Elamites
III	Armenians	Armenians I	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians
IV	Arians	Arachosians	Arians (?)	Arians	Arians or Arachosians
V	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians
VI	Syrians	Syrians	Syrians	Lydians	Syrians
VII	Arachosians	Arians	Arachosians (?)	Arachosians	Arachosians or Arians
VIII	Cilicians	Cilicians	Cilicians (?)	Sogdians	Cilicians
IX	Cappadocians	Cappadocians	Cappadocians(?)	Cappadocians	Cappadocians
X	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians
XI	Saka	Europ. Scythians	Saka tigraxauda	Saka tigraxauda	Scythians
XII	Ionians	Lydians	Ionians (?)	Ionians	Lydians (?)
XIII	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians (?)	Parthians	Parthians
XIV	Gandarians	Gandarians	Gandarians (?)	Gandarians	Gandarians
XV	Bactrians	Bactrians	Bactrians (?)	Bactrians	Bactrians
XVI	Sagartians	Armenians II	Sagartians (?)	Sagartians	Sagartians
XVII	Sogdians	Sogdians	Sogdians (?)	Chorasmians	Sogdians
XVIII	Indians	Indians	Indians	Indians	Indians
XIX	Skudra-Thracians	Daha <sup>5</sup>	Skudra (?)	Skudra	Skudra-Thracians
XX	Arabians	Arabians	Arabians (?)	Arabians	Arabians
XXI	Lydians	Akaufaka -tribe	Drangianians (?)	Drangianians	Median tribe
XXII	Libyans	Putaiya-Oman <sup>6</sup>	Libyans	Libyans	Libyans
XXIII	Ethiopians	Ethiopians	Ethiopians	Ethiopians	Ethiopians

<sup>5</sup> Thracian-Skudra from the Black Sea with identification uncertain, cf. *Daiva Inscription* no. 26 (Walser, 1966:96).

<sup>6</sup> They were neighbours of Egypt. There is uncertainty of their precise location. Herzfeld stated that the Putaya resided on both sides of the Gulf of Aden (Walser, 1966:99).

A question mark indicates uncertainties about the identification(s). Incongruities also occur in the eight shaded groups. There are also identifications by other scholars like Wilber (1969), Dandamaev et al. (1994), Koch (1992), Wiesehöfer (2007), and Shahbazi (2011) (cf. Table 6.1).

Some scholars just borrowed the identification lists from others.<sup>7</sup> Koch (1992) followed another route and grouped certain satrapies together. The explanation for such a grouping is unconvincing and has complicated the identification issue.

### 1.3 TEXT VERSUS IMAGE

Images and texts are two different types of media that function in different ways. According to Bonfiglio (2016:91), *images* are signs that ‘illustrate, copy, exemplify and document the world in a mediated fashion.’ In contrast, *words* (texts) are purely conventional and function as unmotivated signs (Bonfiglio, 2016:91). According to Mitchell (1994:152), words cannot represent an object in the same way a visual representation can. Thus, despite the reference to an object and a description thereof, it can never bring its visual presence before us. ‘*Words can ‘cite’ but never ‘sight’ their objects*’ (Mitchell, 1994:152).

The approaches by Mitchell in the last few decades have made him emerge as an influential figure in discussions about image-text relationships. He tried to clarify the nature of images and how they relate to texts. He frequently reflected on aspects of the *image-versus-text* and the *image-as-text* approaches (Bonfiglio, 2016:95).

In the Achaemenid Empire, more visual material than texts were available. Even with the meagre availability of texts, the latter do supplement and support the interpretation and eventually also the meaning of the visual imagery. However, the researcher should guard against a superficial and overly hasty link between text and image (Cornelius, 2018:157). Another problem that has to be taken into account is the low literacy rate in antiquity. In terms of visual literacy, Bonfiglio (2016:43) stated that it is not possible to quantitatively calculate these literacy rates in the ancient world. Uehlinger (2000:xxv) argued that ‘in the context of largely illiterate societies minor arts had a much greater impact and a larger diffusion than text could ever achieve’. With these problems in mind, the availability of images, whether in minor or major arts, become more relevant than the information in the available texts during the search

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<sup>7</sup> The line drawings of the reliefs of the twenty-three delegations on the Apadana staircase by Walser (1966) and Wiesehöfer (2007) are exactly the same.

for meaning in the visual material. An iconographic analysis of this material also contributes to the search for meaning in images (Keel, 1992).

#### 1.4 SOURCES

The Achaemenids did not leave any comprehensive history that could assist researchers in interpreting the delegations regarding identification, purpose and function. Nor do the delegations under study contain any inscriptions serving as captions that could help in identifying these groups.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, one is dependent on other informative sources for the Persian Empire (cf. the sources in Briant, 2002 & Kuhrt, 2007).

Seven major sources are used to fill in our knowledge of the empire and its subject peoples, namely archaeology, royal inscriptions, classical sources, the Persepolis tablets, the Persepolis plaques, coins in an economic environment, and comparative iconography.

##### 1.4.1 Archaeology

Two of the prominent Achaemenid sites, namely Pasargadae (Stronach, 1978) and Persepolis (Herzfeld, 1931-1935 & Schmidt, 1935-1939) have received the most attention of the excavations in modern-day Iran (Mousavi, 2012:158-191). In addition, there are artefacts, e.g., bowls and metal vases (cf. Figs. 1.3.1 & 1.3.2), that can be compared to some of the objects carried by the delegations (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:112-120 & 124).



**Fig. 1.3.1 Gold bowl. National Museum of Iran, Tehran. 7985 (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:112)**



**Fig. 1.3.2 Silver amphora. National Museum of Iran, Tehran. 1387 (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:124)**

##### 1.4.2 Royal inscriptions

Royal inscriptions were located in different locations and were usually trilingual and written in Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian (Babylonian). These inscriptions relayed the king's ideology and the image of his empire, and the rule he wished to project. Thus, they are among

<sup>8</sup> As is the case with the tribute carriers on the Balawat gates (Schachner, 2007:197-198, Abb.139, 145-149; Fig. 6.3.1).



the most important sources for understanding the empire (Waters, 2014:11-12). Schmitt (2009) gave a complete German translation of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions by *inter alia* Darius I and Xerxes. They sang the praises of the king:

I am Darius, the great King, King of Kings, King of Persia, King of the Lands (Schmitt, 2009:36-39)

Lists of subject peoples were also found on some of the inscriptions, such as part of the *Bisitun Inscription* (Ghirshman, 1964:234; Gabelmann, 1984:10; Garrison, 2013:575-577); part of *the inscription on the tomb of Darius at Nasqh-i Rustam* (Schmidt, 1970:110; Kuhrt, 2001:105); and *the inscription on the pedestal of the Darius statue found at Susa*, where the subject peoples of the Persian Empire were all portrayed in the Egyptian hieroglyphs (Dandamaev et al., 1994:345; Gropp, 2009:290-291) and *inscriptions on the Foundation plaques at Persepolis* (Ghirshman, 1964:156). Some examples of these lists of subject peoples in the royal inscriptions will be discussed and compared when dealing with the identification problem of the gift-bearing delegations on the eastern stairway of the Apadana at Persepolis in Chapters Six – Eight.

### 1.4.3 Persepolis tablets



**Fig. 1.4 Large clay tablet with part of the foundation inscription of Darius I (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:56)**

Two groups of clay tablets (cf. Fig. 1.4) were discovered at Persepolis. First, thousands of clay tablets were found in the fortification wall to the north of the terrace, and they were called the *Persepolis Fortification Tablets (PFT)* (Briant et al., 2008). Unlike the trilingual inscriptions, the composition of the *PFT* consisted of a vast majority of texts written in Achaemenid Elamite cuneiform. There were also clay tags with Aramaic texts (Jones & Stolper, 2008:29-35).

Although these documents were strictly administrative in nature (Boucharlat, 2013:513)<sup>9</sup> they give an insight into the multicultural work force at Persepolis. The inscriptions are now studied at the Oriental Institute in Chicago as a project called the *PFA (Persepolis Fortification Archive)* (Stolper, 2009:104-111). This project aims to make thorough records of the archive and distribute the records widely, freely and continuously. These records are prepared by specialist teams using different methods and sophisticated technologies.<sup>10</sup> New programs and methods are continuously implemented.<sup>11</sup>

The second set of tablets were discovered in a building on the palace terrace at Persepolis, which was called the Royal Treasury. This set of tablets became known as the *Persepolis Treasury Tablets (PTT)*. They give evidence of administrative problems resulting from a sudden shift from that type of economy in which people are paid in goods for their services to that in which they are paid in coins (Cameron, 1948:1). Tributes were now worked out in monetary terms. Briant (2002:391) gave an example of the different satrapies and the tribute they had to pay in talents. The Persepolis Treasury texts are also more directly relevant for the study of the Persepolis reliefs. In these texts, instructions for the records of payment to sculptors at Persepolis occurred.

#### 1.4.4 Persepolis plaques



**Fig. 1.5.1 Stone box for deposit of a pair of gold and silver plaques (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:57)**



**Fig. 1.5.2 Part of the trilingual gold foundation plaque, Persepolis Apadana (postcard from the National Museum of Iran, Tehran)**

<sup>9</sup> The *PFT* mention receipt, taxation, storage, transport and disbursement of goods and livestock to members of the royal family, of nobles living in Fars or travelling in the region or beyond it, deliveries, and small and large groups of workers (Boucharlat, 2013:573).

<sup>10</sup> Example: Conservators clean and stabilise the tablets while using the Compact Phoenix laser cleaning system (Stolper, 2009:109).

<sup>11</sup> Images, editions and cataloguing information all flow into the Online Cultural Heritage Research Environment (OCHRE), where a coordinator gets it ready for public release (Stolper, 2009:106).

Two stone boxes (cf. Fig. 1.5.1) found in the foundations on the northeastern and southeastern corners of the main hall of the Apadana contained a gold and silver plaque in each (cf. Fig. 1.5.2). They were all inscribed in Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian (Babylonian) and were strictly administrative documents (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:57). They read as follows:

Darius, the Great King, King of Kings, King of Countries, son of Hystaspes, the Achaemenid, Saith Darius the King: This is the kingdom which I possess from the land of the Sakas on this side of Sogdiana as far as Kush, from India to Sardis. Over this Ahuramazda has granted me dominion, he who is great above all the gods. May Ahuramazda protect me and my Royal House (Ghirshman, 1964:157-158).

Their contents are similar to the two sets of clay tablets (*PFT* (i) and *PTT* (ii)) (cf. 1.4.3).

### 1.4.5 Classical sources

The Classical sources were written from a Greek perspective by historians like Herodotus in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE and Xenophon in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Cahill, 1985:89; Briant, 2002:19; Waters, 2014:10-11). Herodotus never mentioned Persepolis but described twenty satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire (Herodotus III, 212-213). Herodotus' sources were unknown.<sup>12</sup> His grouping together of people from different regions and tribes present many problems, e.g., why were there so many peoples in one group (satrapy 1) and only one satrapy in 4; why group Indian and Armenian people together in satrapy 13? (Walser, 1966:42-43). Be that as it may, Herodotus' lists and his descriptions of some of the groups as part of the Persian cavalry (VII, 61-71) give valuable information which can be used as comparative sources in identifying the depicted delegations of the Apadana.

### 1.4.6 Coins in an economic environment

In each box, beneath the plaques, a group of gold and silver coins (cf. Fig. 1.6) were found.



**Fig. 1.6 Coin hoard from the Apadana foundation deposit (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:58)**

The coins were all produced in Western Asia Minor. The gold coins were produced in Sardis, and the silver ones came from Greece and Cyprus. These coins shed important light on the history of Greek coinage and perhaps also on the ideology and symbolism of the early

<sup>12</sup> Hecataeus of Miletus and Scylax of Caryanda may have been some of Herodotus' sources (Walser, 1966:44).

Achaemenid Empire (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:58). These foreign coins appear in the Achaemenid heartland and could symbolize the control of Darius I over western sources of wealth. They could also have been potentially chronological indicators (Zournatzi, 2003:1-2).



**Fig. 1.7.1 Gold croeseid stater, c. 560-540 BCE (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:200; British Museum, CM 1841-0726-522)**



**Fig. 1.7.2 Silver croeseid stater, c. 540-520 BCE (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:200; British Museum, CM 1866-1201-1804)**

Coins were *par excellence* associated with the west of the Achaemenid Empire at that time (Zournatzi, 2003:2). ‘Croeseids’ (cf. Figs. 1.7.1 & 1.7.2) became symbols of Persian dominations in Lydia and Sardis in the west.

The Lion-and-Bull motif occurred on both the gold and the silver croeseids (cf. Fig. 4.20.4).

There is no evidence prior to 500 BCE for the circulation of Achaemenid coins. Darius I showed his enthusiasm for western monetary practises with the introduction of his own coinage, the gold ‘daric’ and the silver ‘shekel’, although it was minted in the western part of the empire (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:58).

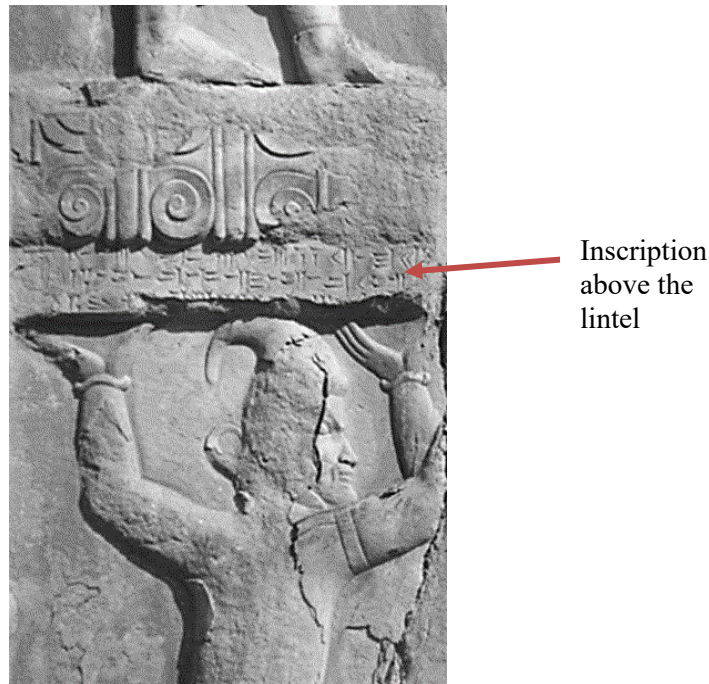
These economic practices provided a unifying perception in the culturally diverse and politically and geographically fragmented territories of the western part of the empire (Zournatzi, 2003:18). It also heralded a new era in the economic landscape of the Achaemenid Empire (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:200).

#### **1.4.7 Comparative iconography**

Foreign throne bearers were depicted on the tombs of the Achaemenid kings, some with trilingual inscriptions on the lintel over each figure. These cuneiform inscriptions, if they were still readable, assisted in the identification of the figures, e.g., the partly restored upper part of the pointed hat of Scythian (cf. Fig. 1.8).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Detail of a throne bearer (Scythian?) with a legend in Persian above the figure in the upper register. Indicated by a red arrow.





**Fig. 1.8 Throne bearer on tomb of Artaxerxes II at Persepolis (ORINT P57518)**

The throne bearers on different tombs were identified, photographed, and described in tabular form by Schmidt (1970). Walser (1966:52-54) not only described the throne bearers on the tomb of Darius I at Nasqh-i Rostam but also included clear line drawings in his *Falttafel 1*. The throne bearers on the western side of the door jambs of the Hall of Hundred Columns were also described and illustrated in the same manner by Walser (1966:58-63). However, previously no detailed comparative iconographic studies have been undertaken to try and solve the identification problem of some of the delegations. Where necessary, these representations will be compared with the *Apadana Reliefs* where applicable.

## 1.5 FOCUS, PROBLEM STATEMENT, GOAL, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 1.5.1 Focus

The focus of this study will be on the eleven delegation groups for which there is no consensus about their identification. Because of this uncertainty, they will be called 'Problem Groups'.

### 1.5.2 Problem statement

There are incongruities in the identification of eleven of the twenty-three delegations in the procession of the gift-bearing subject peoples on the eastern façade of the Apadana at Persepolis. Various scholars have attempted the identification of these Problem Groups, but no attempt has been made to compare the identifications from the different scholars with one another and then assess their conclusions.

### 1.5.3 Goal

The goal will be to find a solution for the problem statement above by answering the specified research questions. By answering these questions, insight can be gained into previous identifications of the delegations, and new conclusions can be drawn.

### 1.5.4 Research questions

In an attempt to identify the Problem Groups on the Eastern façade of the Apadana at Persepolis, the following questions will be addressed:

- Is it possible to determine the reason for the limited number of delegations and their specific sequence in the procession on the Eastern façade?
- What is the identity of the 11 Problem Groups of the delegations?
- Why is there a lack of consensus amongst scholars about the identity of these groups?
- Can understanding the geography, topography and animal and human biology of the Achaemenid empire contribute to the interpretation of these groups?
- Can understanding the functions and purpose of these elaborate reliefs on the Eastern façade of the Apadana help us to identify these Problem Groups?
- Is it possible to identify 11 Problem Groups of the delegations on the Eastern façade of the Apadana at Persepolis through close comparison of scholarship and iconography?

## 1.6 THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

In the proposed study, the reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadana will be taken as a whole that can be broken down into three smaller units. In an iconographic analysis of these units, special attention will be given to the unit forming the twenty-three gift-bearing nations. The Problem Groups will receive special attention.

By using a specific method and approach during the iconographic analysis, the uncertainties surrounding the identity of the Problem Groups will be addressed.

The geographical location and historical background could also contribute towards the addressing of the identification problem.

The study also works with the following hypothesis: the depiction of the delegations in the procession on the Apadana staircase had multiple purposes instead of a single one.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHOD

It is necessary to briefly study the *Apadana Reliefs* within the context in which they were created. To achieve this, a multidisciplinary approach will be followed. Some of the disciplines

that will be incorporated include history, geography, botany, and zoology. The physical and natural world, as well as the location of the Apadana within the confines of Persepolis will be discussed in Chapters Two to Four.

To find the appropriate method(s) to discover the meaning of ancient images, which in this case will be the remains of the *Apadana Reliefs*, one must first look at the primary sources, e.g., the collection of photographs and line drawings and the actual extant material. They were created over a long period, and in the course of time, a large number of these ancient images were damaged, pilfered or eroded.<sup>14</sup> The visual evidence is therefore not always easy to find in an acceptable state. This leaves the modern researcher with a problem, and he/she has to rely on plaster casts to a certain extent, with more recent drawings and clear photographs acting as secondary sources. Fortunately, archaeologists and early travellers recorded their finds of some of these ancient images. This early record, when the reliefs were still in a better condition, can be taken into account during the search for the identification and meaning of the images.

Before 1950, researchers loosely followed the general principles of art history as shaped by a few ‘founding fathers’. One of the latter was the art historian Erwin Panofsky, who in the late 1930s pioneered and implemented a method of analysis when working with ancient images. At the same time, he also refined Warburg’s approach.<sup>15</sup> Panofsky’s work had a formative effect on iconographic methodology. In his precise method, the interpreter has to use his/her practical experience, culturally acquired knowledge and intuition in order to determine the meaning of an image (Weissenrieder & Wendt, 2005:4-5). Panofsky regarded iconography as a branch of art history aimed at identifying three levels of meaning in an image – description, analysis and interpretation. Each level is determined through different analytical operations (de Hulster et al. 2015:37; Bonfiglio, 2016:118). Table 1.2 seeks to give an overview of Panofsky’s approach, and this still serves as a basic guide for scholars seeking the meaning in visual sources.

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<sup>14</sup> This is an ongoing process in Iran caused by acid rain.

<sup>15</sup> Warburg was a contemporary of Panofsky (Nunn, 2019:52)

**Table 1.2 Iconographic analysis (from Panofsky 1955:40)**

	Level of interpretation	Object of interpretation	Instrument of interpretation	Corrective principle of interpretation
1	pre-iconographic <b>description</b>	primary or natural subject matter (forms and motifs)	recognition of forms through practical experience	history of style (how forms and motifs are expressed)
2	iconographic <b>analysis</b>	secondary or conventional subject matter (themes and concepts)	Knowledge of themes through literary sources	history of types (how themes and concepts are expressed)
3	Iconological (or iconographic) <b>interpretation</b>	Intrinsic meaning or content and symbolic value	understanding of meaning through culturally conditional principles	History of 'symbols' (how 'the essential tendencies of the human mind' are expressed)

The following are several scholars who all used Panofsky's method for iconographic analyses: Stansbury-O'Donnell (2011:58), Weissenrieder et al. (2005:6), Strawn (2008:310), de Hulster et al. (2015:37), and Bonfiglio (2016:119).

However, more than one way to interpret visual data developed over the years after Panofsky's ground-breaking work. Quite a number of scholars now use other or additional methods of analysis in conjunction with Panofsky's method. Such a parallel running method-scheme was put forward by Keel (1992:267-272) in Scheme 2 in the Appendix of his book, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden* (1992). Aspects of Keel's second scheme, as summarised in Table 1.3, complements certain aspects of Panofsky's scheme and requires the researcher to investigate finer details of the image, e.g., composition (size, scale, colour), technique of the artist and decoration.

**Table 1.3 Summary of Keel's iconographic method (Adapted by Bonfiglio, 2016:123)**

Object of interpretation	Main question	Methodological procedure	Control and evaluation
Motif <b>1</b>	Which phenomena represent a motif, and how do image details relate to the referent?	Motif-criticism, analysis of convention	Technical quality (state of preservation of image, skill of artist, type of technique)
Scene <b>2</b>	How are individual motifs combined into meaningful units, and	Theme-criticism, analysis of synchronic and diachronic parallels,	Image quality (original or copy, compositional



	what is the relationship of those units to the referent?	composition (size, scale colours, etc.)	unity, later additions or multiple artists)
Decoration 3	How and why are decorations added to motifs and scenes? What is the meaning of an image in its historical context?	Decoration-criticism, analysis of overall decoration, <i>Sitz im Leben</i> of image	Decoration quality (feasibility of a certain decoration for a specific location)

For the purpose of this study, Panofsky's traditional model and iconographic analysis as a methodological tool will be the basic guide necessary for the concrete work of interpreting and striving to find the meaning of the *Apadana Reliefs*. Keel's iconographical method places the emphasis on motif, scene and decoration (cf. Table 1.3). His method will be used as a supplement to Panofsky's interpretation method, and this will then be referred to as the Panofsky-Keel method as this seems to be an appropriate method for the purpose of this study.

An attempt will be made to combine the methods of Panofsky and Keel. Panofsky's three main stages (description, analysis and interpretation) during the analysis process were maintained, but organization within each stage was re-arranged in the following way where **P** indicates Panofsky and **K** indicates Keel. Keel's criticism of Panofsky's second methodological step using literary sources will also be taken into account (cf. Klingbeil, 1999:161).

### **Combined method of Panofsky and Keel**

#### **LEVEL 1 (Pre-iconographic description)**

- Forms and motifs (P)
- How they are recognised and expressed (P)
- Phenomenon representing a motif (K)
- Composition, size, scale and colours (K)
- Image quality. Original or copy (K)
- Technical quality: preservation of the image; skill of the artist; type of technique (K)
- Decoration quality (K)

#### **LEVEL 2 (Iconographic analysis)**

- Themes and concepts (P)
- Combination of the meaningful units (K)
- Compositional unity (K)

- Multiple artists (K)
- Knowledge of themes through literary sources (P)
- History of types and symbols (P)
- Feasibility of certain decorations for a specific location (K)
- How and why are decorations added to motifs and scenes (K)
- Analysis for overall decoration *Sitz im Leben* (K)

### LEVEL 3 (Meaning)

- Meaning of an image in its historical context (K)
- Intrinsic meaning of content and symbolic value (P)
- Understanding meaning through culturally conditioned principles (P).

By using the combined Panofsky/Keel method as an interpretation mechanism, the researcher can also implement additional tools like his/her practical experience, culturally acquired knowledge and intuition in order to determine the meaning of an image (Weissenrieder & Wendt, 2005:4-5). The analysis methods approach developed by other scholars and critique by, e.g., Klingbeil (1999), where applicable, will add additional information while seeking the meaning in the reliefs.

With the above, as an analysis tool, a method was devised for the present study to do a meaningful ‘reading’ of the reliefs. This method consists of two stages: a **total ‘reading’** and an **analytical ‘reading’**. Total ‘reading’ will be integrated into Level 1 of Panofsky/Keel’s iconographic analysis and, where applicable, supplemented by other methods. Analytical ‘reading’ will follow the same route, but Levels 2 and 3 of Panofsky/Keel will be used as a point of departure.

#### 1.7.1 Collecting the material

The archaeological finds, which include the reliefs on the Apadana in Persepolis and elsewhere, form the basis of the present research project. The depictions on these reliefs were collected from various sources. These include plates of the reliefs in Walser (1966), Ghirshman (1964), and Schmidt (1970), as well as applicable photographs on the website of the Oriental Institute in Chicago. Walser (1966) will be used as the basic source for the iconographic study. Also

included are some photographs that were taken on-site and in the National Museum in Tehran (2013, 2015).<sup>16</sup>

Line drawings of the twenty-three nations in Walser (1966: Falttafel 2) and Koch (1992:110-118), as well as line drawings of the throne bearers on the tomb of Darius at Nasqh-I Rustam in Walser (1966: Falttafel 1), will be used.

The scenes of the throne bearers of the royal throne will be used in a comparative manner where necessary. This can be seen as additional tools and perhaps also a control mechanism to assist in the identification of the Problem Groups. Of importance are the inscriptions visible above some of the throne bearers on the royal tombs (Schmidt, 1970: Plates 28-30). Unfortunately, some of these inscriptions have weathered away, while others are only partly visible.

The empire lists of the satrapies mentioned in Herodotus (III, 212-213), as well as the empire lists of subject nations in royal inscriptions, will be collected (Briant, 2002:173).

The Fortification Tablets (*PFT*) and the Treasury Tablets (*PTT*) will be consulted. Although they are mainly administrative in nature, they can shed light on the nationality of the craftsmen and artists. The cultural influence of these artists of the different reliefs will contribute to a meaningful identification and comparison of pictures.

### **1.7.2 Analysing the material**

All groups will be arranged in a table in chronological order according to scholar, date and their identifications. The incongruities in the identifications will then be exposed. Different colours in the table will simplify the spotting of the Problem Groups (cf. Table 6.1).

In order to understand images, they must be regarded as objects of interpretation (Weissenrieder et al., 2005:3). The delegates in the Problem Groups will be properly described using the Panofsky/Keel method. This will hopefully assist in the identification of these Problem Groups in the procession – Groups II, IV, VI, VII, VIII, XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XIX, XXI. The results will be compared in tabular form, giving special attention to similarities and differences. Appropriate visual material (images and line drawings) will also assist in the comparison.

### **1.7.3 Finding meaning in images through iconographic analysis**

According to Cornelius (2018:152), iconography can be defined as a traditional method for exploring the meaning of images. ‘Iconology’ is sometimes differentiated from iconography

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<sup>16</sup> Photographs used in this study were taken by A. Swart unless otherwise documented.

and refers to a more detailed study of visual images. Certain aspects of Achaemenid iconography, like identifying or describing the subject matter of an image, will be touched upon and discussed in order to find clarity on the following:

- Where can the images be found?
- Do they contain more than one type of image?
- How is the study of iconography approached?
- Which method(s) are used to find the meaning of the images? (Cornelius, 2018:151).

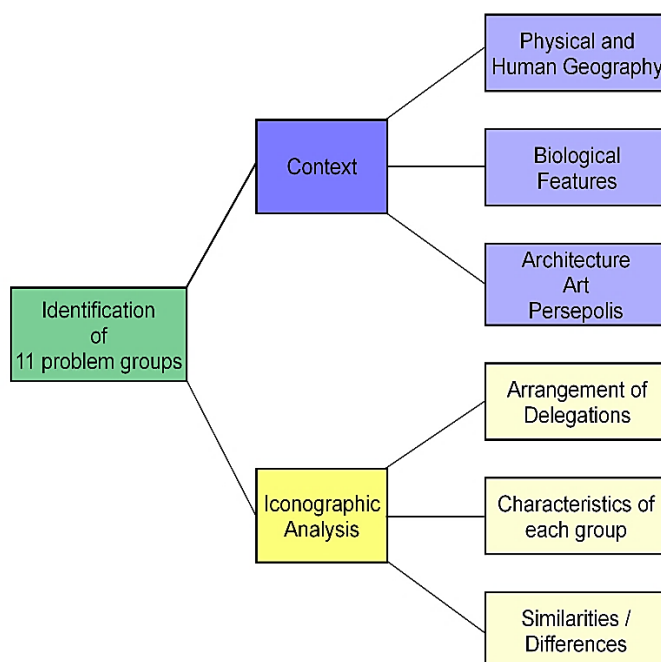
#### 1.7.4 Purpose and function of the procession

On viewing the ruins of the Apadana at Persepolis and looking at the 3-dimensional reconstruction of the building by Rezaeian (2004), one stands in awe at the size and grandeur of the building. To adorn the access staircases to the building on the eastern and northern facades with stone cut reliefs depicting hundreds of people in three distinct groups must have served a certain purpose and function.

There is no consensus among scholars as far as the purpose and function of this procession are concerned. The Nowruz hypothesis will be argued against other hypotheses. From the result of these arguments, a conclusion will be drawn.

#### 1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN

The following design was created and used for the present research project.



The multiple-disciplanry approach that was followed is clear from the context in the diagram. The iconographic analysis of the relevant material was divided into different sections from which conclusions could be drawn.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PERSEPOLIS

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study of the *Apadana Reliefs* at Persepolis necessitates a brief look at the physical geography during the time of the Achaemenid Empire,<sup>17</sup> in which Persepolis was built. Special attention will be given to certain natural features, e.g., the climate, which was influenced by the topography and also contributed to the dispersal of different plants and animals in certain areas to facilitate the settlement of different geo-cultural groups in different areas that suited their requirements – be it a nomadic lifestyle, pastoralists or agriculturalists. This, in turn, will shed light on the context in which the peoples in the *Apadana Reliefs* were dressed in a certain way and the specific gifts they presented to the king on a special occasion.

#### 2.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

##### 2.2.1 Geographical location

Geography can be regarded as a holistic field that applies the spatial perspective to the study of peoples and their environment (Fahrer, 2012:8). Originally, the area known as the Near and Middle East consisted of separate cultural entities (Amiet et al., 1987:11) and gradually became a somewhat cohesive mosaic of numerous cultural groups who now inhabited the morphologically unequal territory of the Achaemenid Empire (Curatola & Scarcia, 2004:11).

For more than two hundred years, the Achaemenid Empire (cf. Map 2.1) was the largest empire the world had seen – stretching from the Hellespont to northwest India and extending into Central Asia up to the frontiers of modern Kazakhstan (Kuhrt, 2001:93). In certain instances, the boundaries followed the natural features, e.g., mountains and rivers that divided and also protected the inhabitants of Persia from their neighbours in ancient times just as they do today (cf. 2.2.2).

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Achaemenid’ is derived from the eponymous founder of the ruling dynasty, ‘Achaemenes’. It was the name of the Persian royal family, members of which ruled the empire for nearly two hundred years (Kuhrt, 1997:647).



Map 2.1 Achaemenid Empire with subject peoples (Roaf 1996:208-209)



The core region of imperial Persia was geographically roughly equivalent to modern Iran (Brosius, 2006:5). The Achaemenid heartland can be roughly compared with the modern Iranian province of Fars, ancient Parsa (Henkelman, 2012:931; Waters, 2014:6). The geography of Fars can be described as a series of steps leading from the Persian Gulf to the central deserts of Iran, with the largest and most fertile step or plain being that of the present Marvdasht where the ruins of Persepolis are situated (Frye, 1984:8).

The province of Fars cannot be separated from the neighbouring province of Khuzestan, consisting of the foothills of the Zagros Mountains and a plain which is an extension of Mesopotamia.<sup>18</sup>

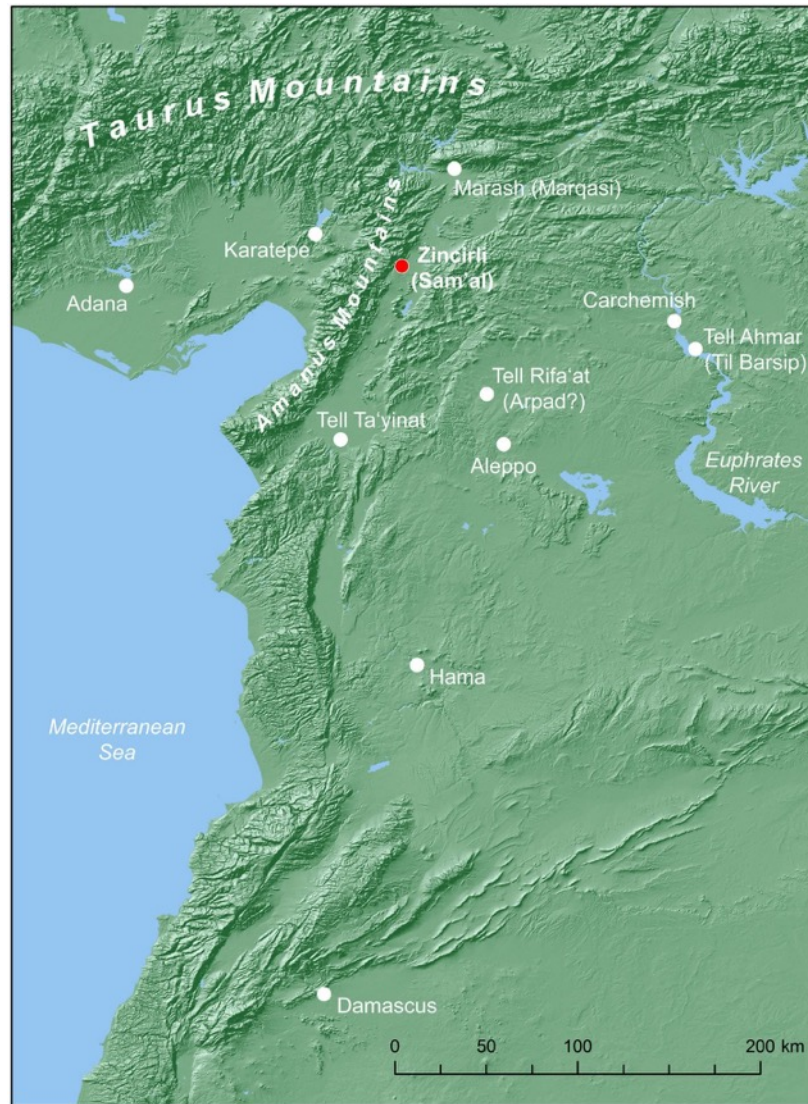
Moving away from the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire to the rest of the empire's territory, there is great variation in the geographical landscape. Starting in the east, the Indus River has the Hindu Kush and vast deserts to the west and northwest and the Indian Ocean/South Arabian Sea to the south. Iran forms part of the southern shoreline of the Caspian Sea (28 m below sea level) with the Elburz Mountains to the south of the shoreline. Mesopotamia also consists of a morphologically unequal territory. The Mesopotamian territory included the two main rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, which dominated the geography and settlement of Mesopotamia (Boardman, 2000:12). The seasonal flooding of the rivers left behind fertile alluvial plains on their banks. Anatolia (modern Turkey) is largely a high, mountainous plateau with people settling in the major valleys (Boardman, 2000:10). Geographically Anatolia is bounded by the Black Sea to the north, the Aegean Sea to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the south.

In the south, the Cilicians occupied a fertile plain with passes to the north through the Taurus range into Anatolia. Part of the Iranian plateau lies to the east, but the Amanus Mountains cut off the main route to Upper Mesopotamia (Boardman, 2000:11; cf. Map 2.2).

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<sup>18</sup> Several decades of historical research as well as in art historical and archaeological finds have evinced a link between the two regions (Boucherlat, 2013:503).





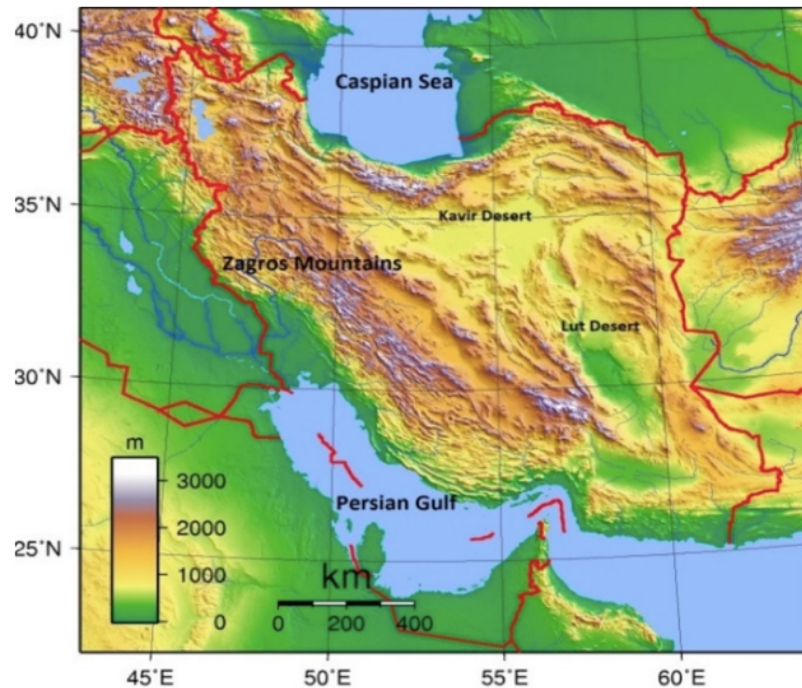
**Map 2.2 Taurus and Amanus Mountains (Schloen, 2018)**

Palestine has four main geographical regions: Mediterranean coastal plain; the central hills; the Jordan rift valley dominated by the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea; and the barren Negev desert that lies to the south (Swart, 2018:77-80). The River Nile can be regarded as the life-artery of Egypt, and with its annual flooding, it regulates the seasons and supplies fertile alluvial soil for agriculture (Swart, 2018:41-42). Sandy desert flanks this fertile area.

From the above, it is clear that the Achaemenid Empire, at the height of its reign, consisted of a large area with a wide range of physical features.

### 2.2.2 Topography

Between the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates on one side and that of the Indus on the other, rises a huge plateau, trapezoidal in shape with an altitude that ranges between 1 000 and 1 500 m and rimmed in on all sides by lofty chains of mountains (cf. Map 2.3). Between the mountain and the desert was good soil, but adequate water was rare (cf. 2.2.3.2).



**Map 2.3 Topography of Iran (Sharifi, Steinacker & Saghafian, 2016:6)**

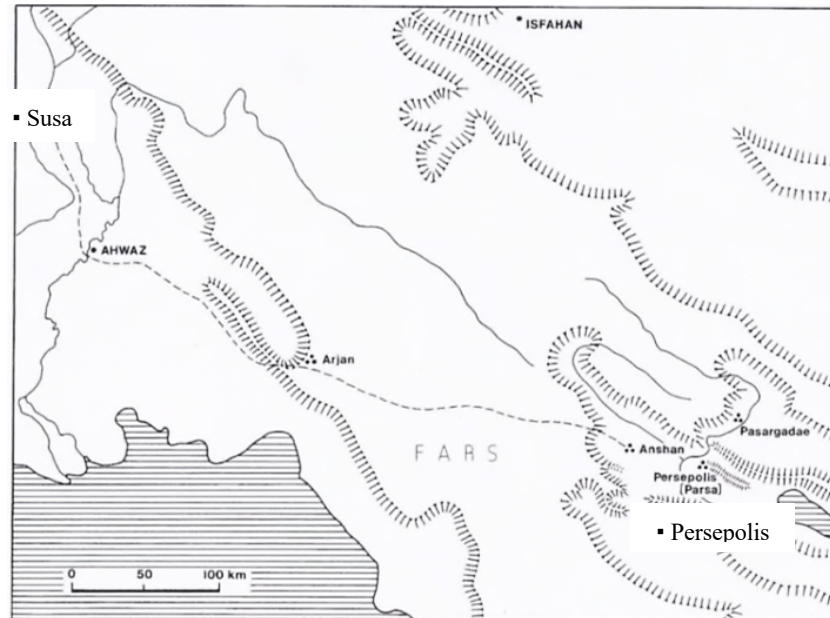
A vast desert takes up the centre of the plateau (Huart, 1972:1-2). These deserts were difficult to traverse and were covered in part by salt lakes. Despite these problems, the desert plateau was the location of all the major east-west land routes of antiquity and eventually formed part of the Silk Road from China (cf. 2.5.4.3).

From the southeast to the northwest, the Zagros Mountains<sup>19</sup> form numerous parallel chains with the valleys, ending in intermontane plains (Henkelman, 2012:931) and embraced major Median, Elamite, and Achaemenid cities. The Elburz Mountains with the highest peak, Mount Damavand (5 604 m), contrasts strongly with the narrow, fertile coastal strip of the Caspian Sea (Boardman, 2000:12; Frye, 1984:6).

The morphologically unequal territory of mountains and deserts divided and separated people more than rivers and lakes. Consequently, many peoples, speaking different languages and dialects and who had different ways of life, settled in isolated valleys. This resulted in an empire with a varied multicultural population (Gates-Foster, 2014:175).

<sup>19</sup> Pressure from the Arabian plate caused a series of folds in the Iranian landscape resulting in the creation of the Zagros Mountains. The digital elevation model (DEM) of this landscape clearly illustrates the numerous ranges that make up the Zagros Mountains (Fahrer, 2012:8).

The topography of Thrace and Anatolia is also briefly described by Boardman (2000:10-11), but the focus will mainly be on the topography of the areas that have a bearing on Fars and its surroundings – the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire (cf. Map 2.4).

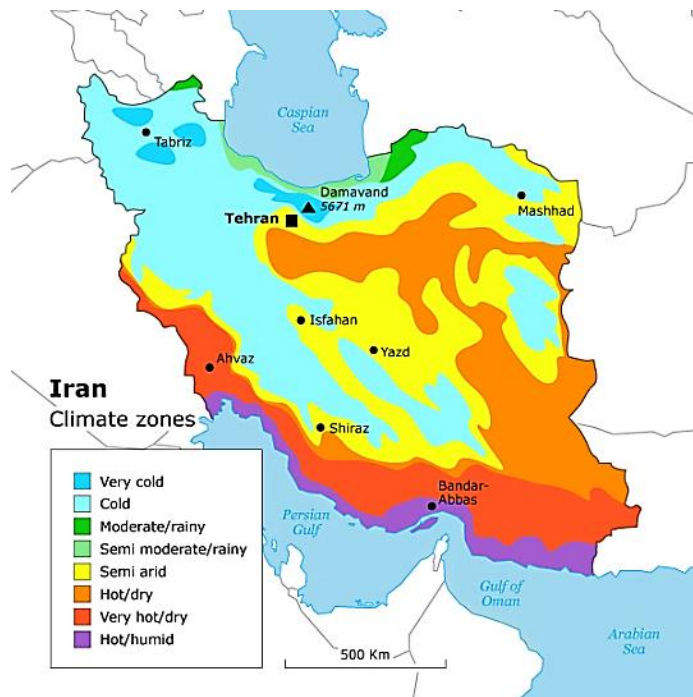


**Map 2.4 The interlocking valleys in the vicinity of Shiraz (Stronach, 1997:36)**

The Marvdasht is really a series of connecting plains separated by individual mountains, but not ranges. One could travel from Anshan (an ancient Elamite city) to Persepolis, continuing to a saltlake in the south without crossing any mountain pass (Frye, 1984:8).

### 2.2.3 Climate

Quantifiable data on climatic conditions during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE are scarce and contradictory. There are dramatic changes in the climate of Iran across its north-south extent, with cold, harsh conditions in the north and excessive heat in the south. However, one does get an idea of the variety of climatic zones of the Achaemenid heartland if certain relevant data are studied, e.g., the plant life which occurred in certain areas during this period in history (cf. 2.4.2). New techniques are being used and result in new data being discovered. Although the climate zones, illustrated in the map below (cf. Map 2.5), are recent, certain factors that influence climatic conditions remained the same, e.g., geographical location relative to rain-bearing air masses and its topography (Jones, 2013:21).



**Map 2.5 Climate zones of Iran (Fanack, 2020)**

For the purpose of this study, only a few aspects of the climate in the Achaemenid heartland will be discussed, namely altitude, temperature (cf. Map 2.5), and precipitation. Four **altitudinal climate zones** between which conditions may differ radically in the southern Zagros are the following:

- (i) Dry and warm coastal lowlands and foothills (900 to 1300 m) suited for date culture.
- (ii) A fertile and populous moderate zone with grape, other fruit and vegetable cultivation.
- (iii) Higher colder lands (2000 to 2200 m) suited for summer pasture and cereal cultivation.
- (iv) An alpine zone with summits rising to 4 000 m fit only for summer pastures (Henkelman, 2012:932).

#### *2.2.3.1 Temperature and precipitation*

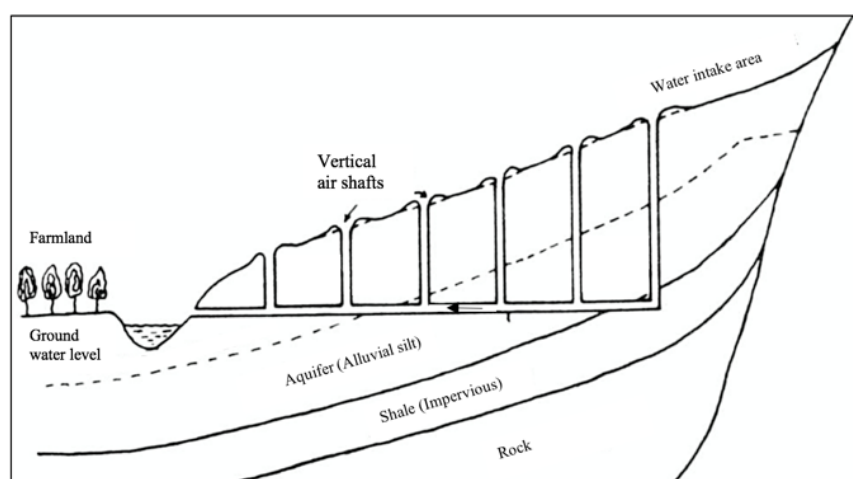
The climate in Iran is strongly seasonal, with warm summers and cold winters and spring-and-winter dominated precipitation. Precipitation values are low across the central desert basin due to the lee effect from the Zagros to the Elburz Mountains (Jones, 2013:20 & 24). In contrast to the low precipitation of the central desert, the coastal plain of the Caspian Sea can be swept by



torrential rains reaching up to 150 mm per year. The extreme heat in summer in certain areas is tempered by the coolness of the nights (Huart, 1972:3).<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2.3.2 Water supply

The shortage or absence of water in any environment will have a negative impact on all living things – humans, plants, and animals. The rulers of the Achaemenid Empire had to address this serious problem. In their empire, they had lakes, of which most were seasonal lakes, spreading over large areas at the end of winter but almost vanishing at the end of summer. The Caspian Sea, however, had a constant supply of water (Frye, 1984:7). With the exception of the lakes and a few rivers, people had to find other solutions for their water problem. The Achaemenid kings played a significant role to control the access to water. Royal officials had to manage the crucial canal system in Babylonia. Archaeology also reveals constant attempts at building dams and cisterns to preserve every drop of precious water.



**Fig. 2.1 Cross-section of a qanat (Biswas 1985:209)**

The kings are also known to have constructed an extensive underground irrigation system, known as the qanat system (Kuhrt, 1997:700). Qanat systems<sup>21</sup> were gently sloping tunnels carrying water from beneath the water table to the surface outflow. Springs were also tapped, and the water led to the cultivatable land by the qanat system (Huart, 1972:3; cf. Fig. 2.1).

At Persepolis, the water was collected by a series of small channels to the east of the terrace, which directed water to a deep cistern where it was stored (Roaf, 2004:396). The cistern in Fig. 2.2 probably dates from the early stages of the construction process and can still be seen today.

<sup>20</sup> For this reason, caravans preferred to travel by night during the summer (Huart, 1972:3).

<sup>21</sup> The *qanat* systems are found across Iran and may date from as early as 800 BCE (Jones, 2013:26).



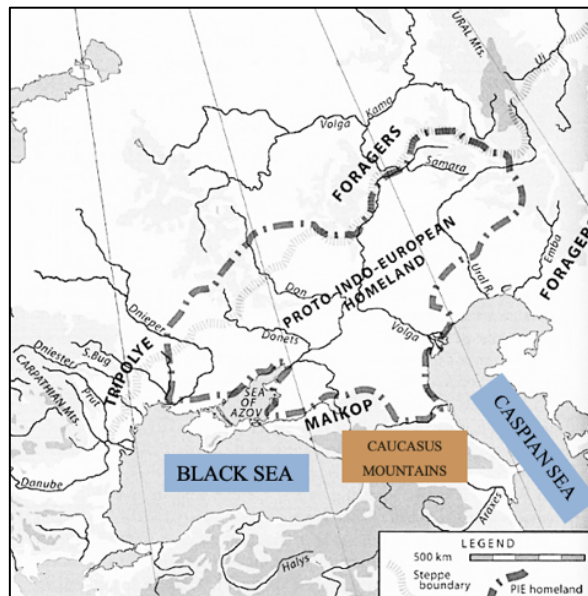
**Fig. 2.2 Remains of a water cistern at Persepolis (Photo L. Jonker)**

The underground water on a mountainside was tapped by a channel, which was accessed through vertical shafts. Neither physical nor financial resources were required for the work and the upkeep of the system (Kuhrt, 2007:726).

## 2.3 HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

### 2.3.1 Migration of certain Proto-Indo-European tribes/groups

In an area located north of the Black Sea, the Caucasus Mountains, and the Caspian Sea, there lived a large number of people speaking the Proto-Indo-European language (cf. Map 2.6). The area will be referred to as the Pontic-Caspian steppes.

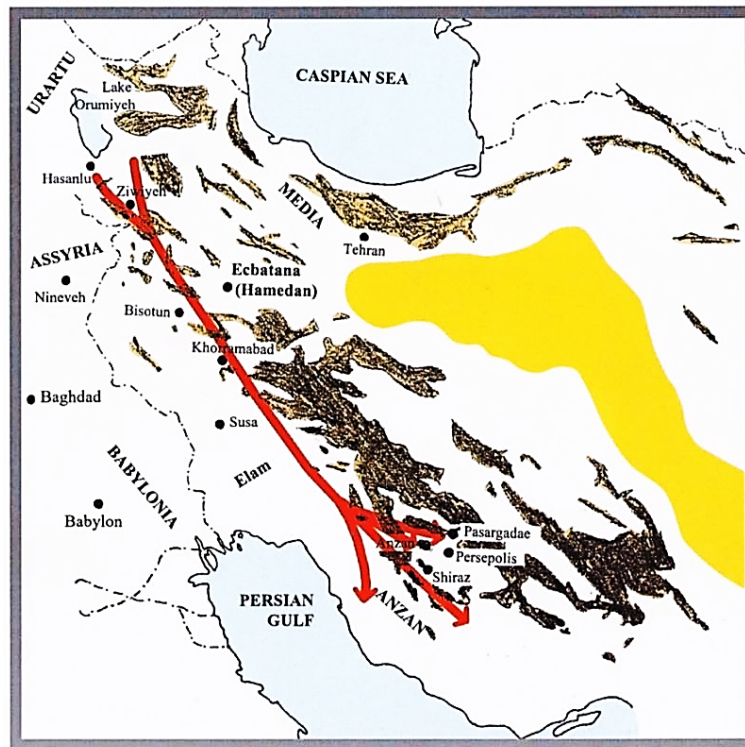


**Map 2.6 The Proto-Indo-European homeland between about 3500–3000 BCE (Anthony, 2007:84)**

It is a problem for scholars to date the migrations, but certain archaeological finds (cultural material) and linguistic analysis contribute to the knowledge of these people, their culture, daily life, and language (Anthony, 2007:5).

The present study deals with different groups/tribes who migrated in a southeastward direction to what is now known as Iran. There is no specific timeline for the different Proto-Indo-European speaking migrating groups.

### 2.3.1.2 *From where, when, and why did the groups/tribes settle in parts of the Persian Empire?*



**Map 2.7 The march of the Persians about 700 BCE (Koch, 2006:3)**

Map 2.7 answers the ‘*where*’ in the question.

Indo-European nomads started to disperse in a southeastward direction from their homeland on the southern Russian steppe.<sup>22</sup> This was a gradual process and took place as successive waves of migrations over a period of time. The migrant scene changed considerably with the arrival of the Aryans (Iranians), whose tribes included the Medes and the Parsa (Persians). They brought their own history, culture, and language (Sumner, 1994).

*When?* The estimated time for the occupation of Iran by Proto-Indo-European speakers is 4500 to 2500 BCE (Anthony, 2007:81). Once they settled in a specific area, their language was now

<sup>22</sup> The case for a steppe homeland is stronger today than in the past, because of dramatic new archaeological discoveries in the steppes (Anthony, 2007:5).

called Indo-European.<sup>23</sup> In Iran, the language was called Indo-Iranian, which developed from a northeastern set of dialects between 2500-2200 BCE (Anthony, 2007:5).

As the Proto-Indo-Europeans moved further south, they came into contact with the Elamites,<sup>24</sup> an indigenous people, who had been the eastern neighbours of Mesopotamia for thousands of years. The principal centres of the Elamites were Susa in Khuzestan and Anshan in Persis. When writing on clay, the Elamites used a cuneiform script that was distinct from Akkadian. When Elam was at a political low point, Iranian pastoralists (Persians) moved into Fars and intermingled with the local Elamites and also adopted the Elamite script to conduct their administration (Brosius, 2006:3).<sup>25</sup>

*Why?* By the time the first migration waves started southeastward (cf. Map 2.7), there were no longer hunter-gatherers. People had become semi-nomadic pastoralists because sheep and cattle were domesticated by that time and had to be moved to suitable pastures. Other people became agriculturalists who settled in areas where they could produce specific crops in fertile valleys. This resulted in a sedentary lifestyle (cf. Olmstead, 1948:60).

Gradually, different tribes settled in Iran in areas that best suited their requirements best. Widespread changes in settlement patterns occurred from c. 3500-2000 BCE. The use of wagons<sup>26</sup> in which tents, food supplies and water could be transported resulted in longer journeys and settlement further away from the Proto-Indo-European homeland (Anthony, 2007:73). By the end of this period (c. 3500-2000 BCE), horses were also domesticated. On horseback, they scouted further afield for new settlement sites and the avoidance of hostile people.

Some of these cultural groups, as they appear in the reliefs of Persepolis, will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Six to Eight.

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<sup>23</sup> Indo-European forms the foundation for languages spoken by about three billion people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Anthony, 2007:5).

<sup>24</sup> The Elamites whose civilisation dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:20).

<sup>25</sup> Elamite was one of the languages in the trilingual inscriptions by Darius and Xerxes (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:20).

<sup>26</sup> Remains of about 250 wagons and carts have been discovered in the steppe grasslands of Russia and the Ukraine dated c. 3000-2000 BCE (Anthony, 2007:73).





**Map 2.8 The Persian (Achaemenid) Empire (Bryce, 2009:544)<sup>27</sup>**

It is impossible to determine exactly when the different groups/tribes arrived and settled in Persia. However, by the time Darius I became king, the migrants were settled, as indicated on the map above (cf. Map 2.8). There were no clear boundaries between the groups/tribes. There might have been different groups at different times in a specific location during the reign of a specific king. The consolidation of more than one group/tribe at a time was a possibility and they could just have been grouped together, as e.g., in the *Bisitun Inscription* by Darius I. It is not clear why there were only twenty-three subject peoples represented in the *Apadana Reliefs* in Persepolis (cf. Chapter Six). The Greek historian, Herodotus (III, 212-213), only mentions twenty groups in which some groups contained more than one cultural group.<sup>28</sup> Lists of the latter differ between different royal inscriptions or in Greek literature (cf. Tables 2.1 & 2.2).

Briant (2002:173) constructed a table in which different groups of subject peoples are listed in different royal inscriptions. Some of these ‘empire lists’, as Briant calls them, are used in an analysis and comparison in Table 2.1 below, between inscriptions by Darius I (DB; DPe; DNa) and one inscription by Xerxes, his son and successor (XPh).

<sup>27</sup> This map will be used throughout the thesis. The extracts from this map are not repeatedly referenced throughout since this reference (Bryce, 2009:544) applies to them all. The scale on this map was used to calculate estimated distances between regions throughout the thesis. These distances are estimations since the exact borders are not known.

<sup>28</sup> Group Sixteen: Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians and Arians (Herodotus III, 213).

The relevant part of the *Bisitun Inscription* by Darius I is used as a templet for the other three lists that are used. There is virtually no pattern in the sequence in which the subject peoples occur in the different lists. The number of the peoples also differ in the lists.

**Table 2.1 Similarities in four royal inscriptions**

DB	DPe	DNa	XPh
Bisitun Inscription	One of four inscriptions placed on the south façade of the Persepolis terrace	Nashq-e-rustam	Xerxes Inscription (Daiva)
Elam	Elam	Elam	Elam
Babylonia	Babylonia	Babylonia	Babylonia
Assyria	Assyria	Assyria	Assyria
Arabia	Arabia	Arabia	Arabia
Egypt	Egypt	Egypt	Egypt
Sardis	Sardis	Sardis	Sardis
Ionia	Ionia Ionians	Ionia	Ionians
Media	Media	Media	Media
Armenia	Armenia	Armenia	Armenia
Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia
Parthia	Parthia	Parthia	Parthia
Drangiana	Drangiana	Drangiana	Drangiana
Aria	Aria	Aria	Aria
Chorasmia	Chorasmia	Chorasmia	Chorasmia
Bactria	Bactria	Bactria	Bactria
Sogdiana	Sogdiana	Sogdiana	Sogdiana
Gandhara	Gandhara	Gandhara	Gandhara

<b>Sattagydia</b>	Sattagydia	Sattagydia	Sattagydia
<b>Arachosia</b>	Arachosia	Arachosia	Arachosia
<b>Makran</b>	Makran	Makran	Makran

**Table 2.2 Differences in the four royal inscriptions**

<b>DB</b>	<b>DPe</b>	<b>DNa</b>	<b>XPh</b>
<b>Bisitun Inscription</b>	<b>One of four inscriptions placed on the south façade of the Persepolis terrace</b>	<b>Nashq-e-Rustam</b>	<b>Xerxes inscription (Daiva)</b>
<b>Persia</b>	—	—	—
<b>Sealand</b>	—	—	Sealand
—	Saggartia	—	—
—	Indus	Indus	Indus
—	—	Thrace	Skudra (Thrace)
—	—	Libya	Libyans
—	—	Carians	Carians
—	—	—	Across the Sea
—	—	—	Dahae
—	—	—	Akaufakans
<b><i>Saka</i></b>	<b><i>Saka</i></b>	<b><i>Saka paradrya</i> European Scythians <i>Saka haumavarga</i> <i>Saka tigraxaudā</i></b>	<b><i>Saka haumavarga</i> <i>Saka tigraxaudā</i></b>
<b>23 groups</b>	<b>24 groups</b>	<b>29 groups</b>	<b>31 groups</b>

In DNA, three different groups of **Saka** appear. When one studies Map 2.8 above, the location of the three different groups become clear. The European Scythians (**Saka paradrya**) lived north of the Black Sea; the **Saka haumavarga** (haoma-drinking people) to the east of the Jaxartes River (the present-day Syr Darya), and the **Saka tigraxaudā**, the pointed hat Scythians, near the southeastern part of the Caspian Sea. From this, it is clear that different branches of *Saka* existed in different locations. Where the Saka, mentioned in the *Bisitun Inscription* (DB) and the southern façade of the Persepolis terrace, lived and to which branch of *Saka* they belonged is unclear/unknown.

Why were there separate inscriptions for Ionia and Ionians in DPe? Xerxes in XPh used the word Ionians. Some other questions also arise. Where was ‘Across the Sea’; Dahae and Akaufakans? Where did the Carians live? (cf. Chapters Seven & Eight).

From the above, it is clear that the human geography of the Achaemenid Period in Persian history consisted of a variety of subject peoples who migrated southwards in waves over a long period. On the arrival of the first groups from the north, the indigenous Elamites had already occupied the land for thousands of years (Potts, 2006:111).

By the time Darius I came to power, his empire was a constellation of cultural groups, civilisations, and languages (Rubio, 2006:79).

## 2.4 BIOLOGICAL FEATURES

### 2.4.1 *Homo sapiens* (humans)

Humans, as an important biological feature, played an important and continuous role in the Achaemenid Empire.

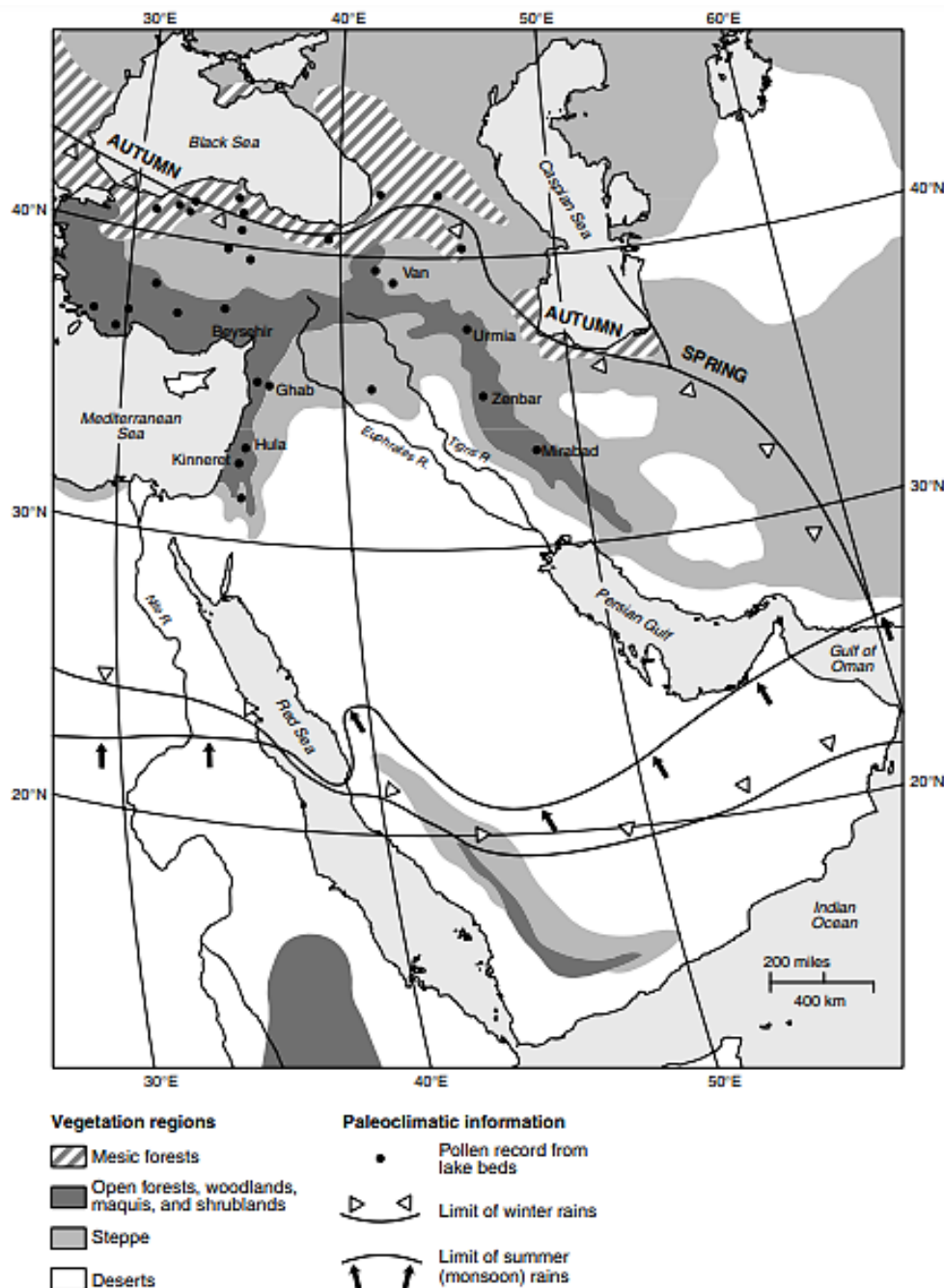
### 2.4.2 Vegetation

In order to survive in different geographical, topographic, and climatic zones, plants are adapted to grow in their natural habitat, e.g., plants in the alpine region will not be able to survive in the arid and semi-arid regions. The same applies to domesticated plants that supply food for human beings. Cereals, for example, can only be cultivated in an area where the altitude, soil, and water supply are adequate (Ritchie et al., 1998:97).

The occurrence of herbivorous animals in a certain area is also dependent on the availability of plants as food sources and water in that area.

In antiquity, more water was available all over Iran than in recent times. Water and vegetation were, and are, more plentiful in Azerbyan than elsewhere, except on the Caspian Sea coast. The land becomes more arid as one goes southeast.

Present vegetation regions, as well as paleoclimatic information, are illustrated in Map 2.9 below.



**Map 2.9 Present vegetation regions as well as paleoclimatic information (Cordova, 2005:113)**

#### 2.4.2.1 Non-domesticated trees

The land, in many regions such as the mountains of Fars, is much the same today as it was 3000 years ago, in both temperature and landscape (Frye, 1984:7). However, the trees were greater in number than today.

The most common trees were the poplar (*Populus* sp.) and cedars (*Cedrus libani*) which supplied timber for construction; plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*) for making doors; and elm (*Ulmus* sp.) used for plough handles. Other trees were used for firewood. The cypress tree (*Cupressus sempervirens*) was the first choice for Iranian gardens.

#### 2.4.2.2 Domesticated plants

For a morphological wild population to be transformed into a morphological domestic population takes from a few to 200 years. These estimates are based on mutation rates and selection pressure (Willcox, 2012:167).

How do we know which domesticated plants were available during the Achaemenid Period? The following sources/methods are used to answer this question:

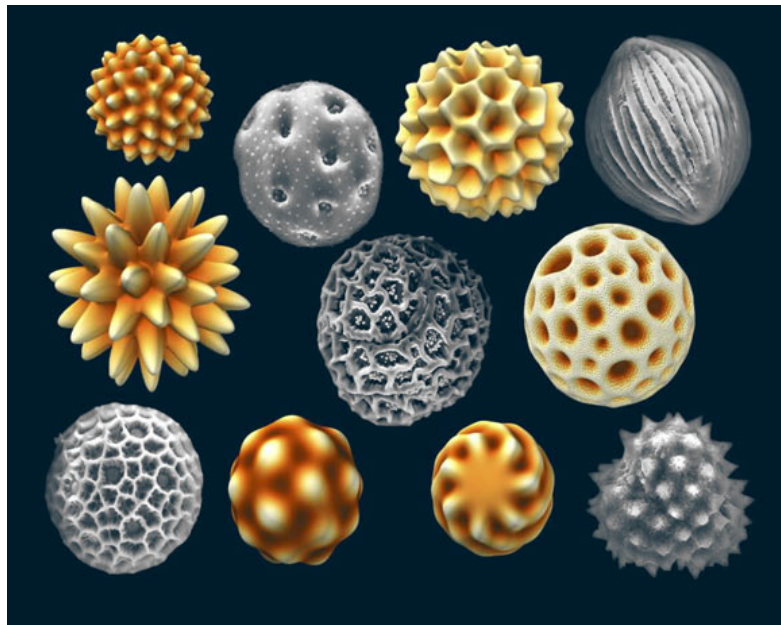
- (i) **Cuneiform inscriptions.** From the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE onwards, Mesopotamian cuneiform sources mention different kinds of fruit and nuts, e.g., dates, grapes, figs, pomegranates, almonds, and pistachios (Tengberg, 2012:183-184 & 199). Fruit appears in lexical lists, records of economic transactions, notes on delivery to temples and palaces, medical texts, descriptions of banquets, and lists of offerings to deities.
- (ii) **Radiocarbon dating.** Charred plant remains resist oxidation. Charred seeds contain carbon that was absorbed during a single year and can be directly and correctly dated by using AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry).<sup>29</sup>
- (iii) **Palynology.**<sup>30</sup> Pollen grains extracted from archaeological or geological deposits can be examined under an electron microscope. They differ in aperture number and type, ornamentation, tectum size, and shape (cf. Fig. 2.2). These characteristics aid in the identification process. 'Pollen sequences from

<sup>29</sup> AMS is a technique for measuring long-lived radionuclides (radioisotopes) that occur naturally in our environment.

<sup>30</sup> Palynology is the study of pollen grains and other spores, especially as found in archaeological or geological deposits.



eastern Turkey and western Iran suggest that tree pollen approached modern values only by 7000-5000 BCE' (Wilkinson, 2012:16).



**Fig. 2.2 A variety of pollen-grains representing specific plants (Radja & Lavrentovich, 2019)**

Edible domesticated and cultivated plants will be divided into two main groups – annuals and perennials.

#### 2.4.2.3 Annuals

Table 2.3 below gives an idea of founder plants that were the basis of early farming in the Near East.

**Table 2.3 Founder plants that were the wild progenitors of some plants that are still used thousands of years later (Compiled from Willcox, 2012:166)**

Wild progenitor	Cultivar	English name
<i>Hordeum sponatneum</i>	<i>H. disichon</i>	Barley
<i>Lens orientalis</i>	<i>L. culinaris</i>	Lentil
<i>Pisum humile</i>	<i>P. sativum</i>	Pea
<i>Cicerreticulum</i>	<i>C. arietinum</i>	Chickpea
?	<i>Vicia faba</i>	Broad bean
<i>Linum bienne</i>	<i>L.usitatissimum</i>	Flax

#### 2.4.2.4 Perennials

Several millennia after the cultivation of annual crops in the area of the Fertile Crescent, during the early Neolithic (approximately 10,000 years ago), the first signs of a new and important

category of food plants, namely fruit-bearing trees or shrubs, appeared (Tengberg, 2012:181; cf. Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 Fruit trees and vines with edible fruits (Compiled from Tengberg, 2012:181-200)**

Plant	Distribution and habitat	Propagation	Function
<b>Grape</b> ( <i>Vitis vinefera</i> )	Occurred from the western Mediterranean to Central Asia. Also found on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. Can adapt to many situations but prefers a mild climate (185).	Rooting of twigs and later by grafting (190).	Consumed fresh and dried as raisins. Winemaking <sup>31</sup> (188).
<b>Olive</b> ( <i>Olea europaea</i> )	Strictly Mediterranean. Well adapted to climatic conditions (189).	Planting of cuttings or of the knobs that develop on the base of the trunk. Also, by grafting (190).	Production of olive oil had many uses. Complement to local diets. Lighting. Ointments. Wood for construction, manufacturing of tools and for fuel. Young shoots from pruning cultivated trees were used as fodder for livestock (190).
<b>Fig</b> ( <i>Ficus carica</i> )	In the Jordan valley 11 000 years ago. Essentially Mediterranean but also further east in the Caucasian and southern Caspian regions (192).	Rooting of twigs.	Consumed fresh and dried.
<b>Date palm</b>	Cultivated throughout hot deserts.		Consumed fresh and dried or as an ingredient in recipes. Syrup or 'date honey' was produced as well as 'date beer' – beverage made of dates (193). The palm tree was venerated in the ancient East as the tree of abundance and fruitfulness (Shahbazi, 2004:88).

<sup>31</sup> A winery, consisting of a platform, jars and numerous desicated grape remains from c. 4000 BCE was discovered in a cave complex in Armenia. A second deposit of wine residue was identified in a large storage jar in the central-western Zagros in Iran (Tengberg, 2012:186).



While grape, olive, fig, and date appear in texts as well as in the archaeobotanical record, as main species of the ancient Near East, several other species deserve mentioning, even though their history and importance in past economies are less known to us (Tengberg, 2012:198).

<b>Almond</b> ( <i>Amygdalis communis</i> )	Probably in the Levant and Anatolia.	By rooting and by seeds (199).	Non-bitter seeds consumed as part of the diet.
<b>Pistachio</b> ( <i>Pistachio vera</i> )	Northeast Iran, Afganistan, and Central Asia.	Grafting.	Fruits eaten fresh or roasted. Pistachio oil can be extracted from oil-rich seeds. Wood can be used for construction and fuel.

\*The page numbers cited in the table are all from Tengberg (2012) except for the Shahbazi (2004) reference.

From the information in cuneiform texts and archaeobotanical remains from the Late Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age (c. 3500-3000 BCE), one can draw the conclusion that the different fruit species, when introduced into existing crop assemblages, contributed to a major evolution in plants as a great economical asset (Tengberg, 2012:200).

### 2.4.3 Animals in the ancient Near East

A variety of animals roamed the Near Eastern landscape millions of years ago. From the earliest days of the human species, animals have been central to the subsistence and survival of humans. As the needs of hunter-gatherers changed, certain animals were domesticated for certain purposes at specific times in history. The process of the domestication<sup>32</sup> of animals fundamentally changed the relationship between humans and animals. This process expanded the role of the latter within human societies. Once they were brought into the *domus*, or domestic sphere, animals became enmeshed in the economic, social, and symbolic lives of the communities in which they lived in new and central ways (Arbuckle, 2012:201).

The exact dates for domestication remain controversial among scholars, but with modern techniques like radioactive carbon tests, more consensus about time and space is reached. Domestication of animals does not appear until c. 8800-6500 BCE (Arbuckle, 2012:202). By the end of this period, four major groups of food animals - sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs – were spread across large areas of the Fertile Crescent. This marked the beginning of an unprecedented expansion of people (cf. 2.3) livestock and technologies across much of the ancient Near East (Arbuckle, 2012:202).

<sup>32</sup> Domestication: evidence for the widespread and intensive management of animals (Arbuckle, 2012:202).

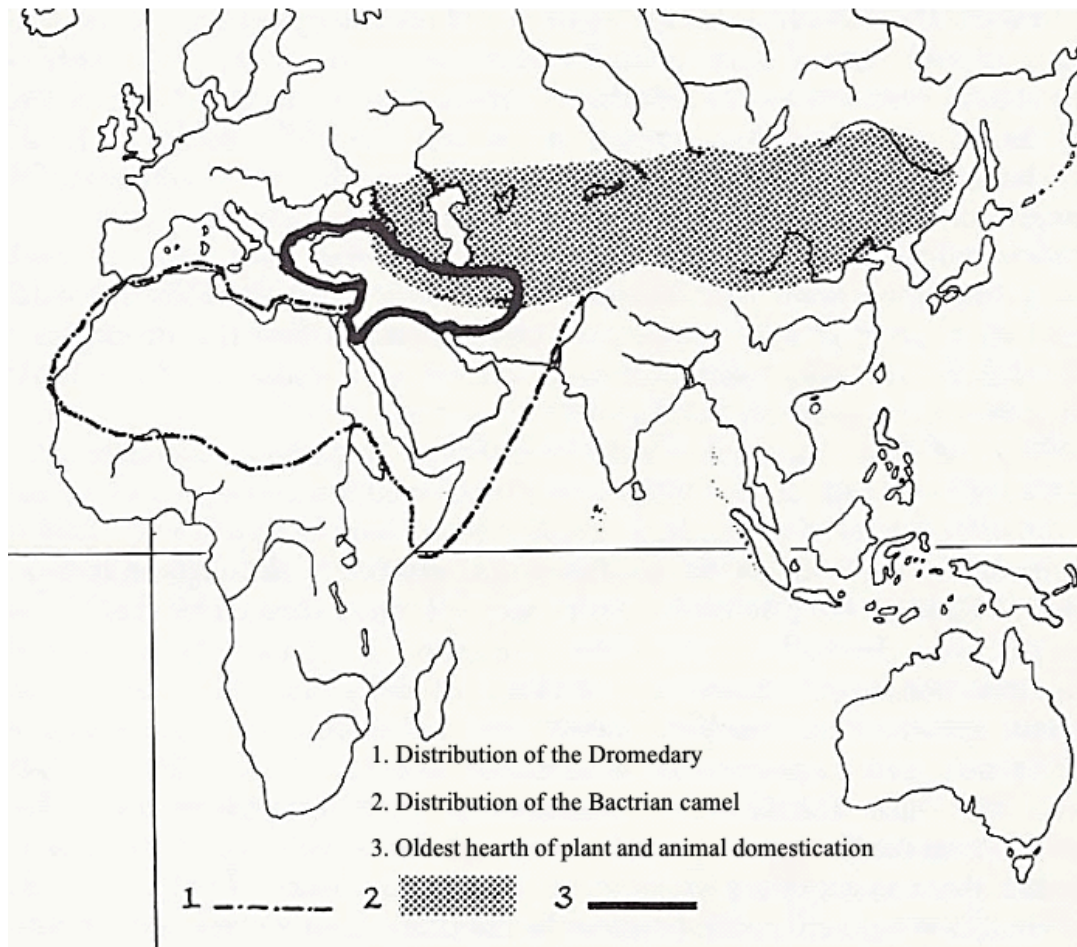
Table 2.5 illustrates the domestication of animals in certain areas as the needs of the different people changed from hunter-gatherers to pastoralists and agriculturalists to facilitate their survival in a certain area. Some of these animals were also depicted in art, although they were not used as a food source or as beasts of burden that formed part of the transport system, e.g., horses, donkeys, and camels.

**Table 2.5 Near Eastern animals**

Animal	Dating of domestication	Distribution	Habitat and adaptations for domestication	Function
Sheep <b>Asiatic mouflon and urial</b> <i>(Ovis orientalis)</i>  <b>Domestic sheep</b> <i>(Ovis aries)</i>	Palaeolithic to Neolithic transition (9000-7000 BCE). (Gilbert, 2002:10).  Domestication by the end of 6500 BCE.  Sheep management in the central and southern Zagros only began about 2 000 years after its emergence in the north (Arbuckle, 2012:204).	Medium-sized forms or <i>mouflons</i> range from Europe to western Iran.  Larger varieties, termed <i>urials</i> , occupy the Caspian region, Central Asia, NE Iran, and Pakistan (Gilbert, 2002:12).	Varied habitats that are dry and unobstructed by tall vegetation (Gilbert, 2002:12)  Relatively small body size made it easy to manipulate, control and transport the animals. They were tameable, lacked a specific territory and had a hierarchical social structure.  Domestic sheep are the result of several domestication events (Kitchell, 2014:168).	Meat and then milk, cheese and wool as secondary products. Once domesticated a host of other industrial products for humans were provided by sheep e.g., horns, pelts, and manure. Sheep were also common sacrificial offerings (Kitchell, 2014:169).
Goats <b>Domestic goat</b> <i>(Capra hircus)</i>	Goat management in the region only becomes widespread after c.7500 BCE.  Goats were among the first domesticated animals.  Derived from the bezoar ( <i>C. aegagrus</i> ) (Kitchell, 2014:76).	Geographical centre of goat domestication not quite clear. May have involved several different regions within the Fertile Crescent. Genetic studies suggest eastern Turkey and Iran as key regions (Arbuckle, 2012:205).	Predators were evaded by the preference of goats for high precipitous terrain with precarious ledges and rocky inclines (Gilbert, 2002:12).	Milk and cheese.  The finer hair, especially that of Cilician goats was used to make fabric. The coarser hair, including that from goats' beards, was used in ropes. The skin was used for bags, rough coverings, and

				wineskins (Kitchell, 2014:76).
Cattle ( <i>Bos taurus</i> )	<p>Cattle is an umbrella term for cows, oxen, and bulls.</p> <p>Some cattle along the Euphrates may have been managed as early as 8800 BCE.</p> <p>Cattle brought under widespread management by the end of 6500 BCE (Arbuckle, 2012:202 &amp; 207).</p>	<p>The ancestors of cattle, the <i>aurochs</i>, had a widespread distribution – from north Africa to India. One of the major areas of domestication was in the area now called Turkey as well as modern-day Iran.</p>	<p>Open savannah and grasslands.</p>	<p>The bartering of goods, such as cattle, began as early as 9000 BCE (Sasongko &amp; Bawono, 2020:109).</p> <p>Cows for milk and meat as well as breeding.</p> <p>Oxen trained to work either in the fields or pulling things by yoke and collar. Most male cattle are killed for their meat before they reach full size. Cattle hides were put to many uses.</p>
<b>Near Eastern domesticated animals in transport and combat</b>				
Horses ( <i>Equus ferus caballus</i> )	<p>Domestication of the horse probably took place in central Asia prior to 3500 BCE.</p>	<p>In Iran, the distribution was localised</p>	<p>Domesticated horses can survive in a variety of habitats, e.g., open grasslands, semi-desert plains, savannahs etc.</p>	<p>The Scythians may have milked them. The importance of horses lay almost exclusively as conveyor of humans and their products and their messages (Kitchell, 2014:89).</p>
<p>Camels (Also see Map 2.10 below)</p> <p><b>Dromedaries (<i>Camelus dromedaris</i>) One-humped camel.</b></p>	<p>Domesticates were clearly present only by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE in the Syro-Jordanian and Arabian deserts where they originated.</p>	<p>Dromedaries originally native to the torrid deserts of North Africa and Arabia.</p>	<p>Principally grazers, but will forage widely, consuming whatever is available, even salty, halophytic brush and thorny, anti-pastoral vegetation passed</p>	<p>They had an unparalleled ability to transport heavy loads in hot, dry environments. Therefore, they became an important</p>

			by other herbivores. The hump of a well-fed camel is usually full and firm as they are simply mounds of stored fat (Gilbert, 2002:19).	component of the transport system in semi-arid regions. The dromedaries also supplied meat and hair to be utilised by their owners (Arbuckle, 2012:214-215).
Bactrians ( <i>C. bactrianus or ferus</i> ) <b>Two-humped camel.</b>	Originated in eastern Central Asia and spread west to Iran by the beginning of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE and into Assyria and Anatolia by the 1 <sup>st</sup> millennium BCE (Arbuckle, 2012:214).	Bactrians ranged from northern Iran westward to China (Gilbert, 2002:19).	Hostile desert environment. The wide and softly padded feet spread the animal's weight, facilitating passage over shifting sands. When raging winds blow those sands into stinging, airborne pellets, camels can still see. They have closed semi-translucent eyelids, while their nostrils narrow to tiny slits (Gilbert, 2002:19).	Used for transport.



**Map 2.10 Natural distribution of the Bactrian camel and the Dromedary (Isaac, 1970:91)**

### Non-domesticated animal used in Achaemenid art

#### Lion (*Panthera Leo*)

**Distribution.** Distribution area ranged from the Khuzistan Plain to the Fars province. By 1870, it was only sighted on the western slopes of the Zagros and in the forest regions south of Shiraz. Last lions were sighted in 1941 in the Fars.

**Habitat and adaptations.** At elevations below 2000 m in steppe vegetation and pistachio-almond woodlands.

**Function.** Carnivores and hunters of deer and other vulnerable animals. It was also the typical prey of the hunting scene which was an important aspect of the Persian courtlife (Almagor, 2021)

## 2.5 BIRTH AND GROWTH OF AN EMPIRE

### 2.5.1 Pre-history of the Achaemenid Empire

For almost five centuries of the first millennium BCE, empires in the ancient Near East rose and fell as set out in Table 2.6.

**Table 2.6 Timeline of empires and major events preceding the Achaemenid Empire (From Waters, 2014: Appendix A)**

Date (BCE)	Empires
<b>c. 900-609</b>	Neo-Assyrian Empire.
<b>830s</b>	Earliest references to Persians in written texts (the annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III).
<b>c. 640</b>	Cyrus, King of Parsumash, pays obeisance to Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria.
<b>c. 640-550</b>	Height of Median power.
<b>c. 626-539</b>	Neo Babylonian Empire.
<b>612</b>	Defeat of Nineveh and fall of Assyria (until 609 BCE).

**2.5.2 A brief overview of events during the Achaemenid reign**

Table 2.7 below gives an insight into the establishment of the period of the Achaemenid Empire under discussion in this study and the major events that occurred during this time.

**Table 2.7 Achaemenid Empire: chronology of main political events (From Kuhrt, 2001:95; Waters, 2014: Appendix A)**

Date (BCE)	Event
<b>550</b>	Cyrus II defeats Astyages, King of the Medes.
<b>540s</b>	Cyrus II conquers Lydia.
<b>539</b>	Cyrus' conquest of Babylonia.
<b>530</b>	Death of Cyrus II in battle; accession of his son Cambyses.
<b>525--522</b>	Cambyses invades and conquers Egypt. Death of Cambyses.
<b>522</b>	Revolt of Bardiya, Cambyses' younger brother; reigns for six months; assassinated by Darius and six Persian nobles; Darius seizes the throne; major series of revolts through a large part of the empire. At some stage: northwest India and Thrace were added to the empire.
<b>509-510</b>	Building of Persepolis begins.
<b>499-493</b>	Ionian revolt.
<b>490</b>	Battle of Marathon.
<b>486</b>	Egypt revolts; death of Darius I: succeeded by his son, Xerxes.

<b>484</b>	Revolt in Babylon.
<b>480/479</b>	Persian invasion of Greece; revolt in Babylonia.
<b>465</b>	Xerxes assassinated; followed after a short period of confusion by his son, Artaxerxes I.
<b>424</b>	Death of Artaxerxes I; succeeded by his only legitimate son, Xerxes II.

### 2.5.3 The Achaemenid Empire

The Achaemenid Empire spanned a period of almost 200 years – from Cyrus II to the destruction by Alexander of Macedon (cf. Table 2.8).

**Table 2.8 Regnal years of the kings of Persia (Kuhrt, 2001:94)**

<b>Ruler</b>	<b>Regnal years (BCE)</b>
Cyrus II the Great (son)	559-530
Cambyses II (son)	530-522
Bardiya (Smerdis) (brother)	522
Darius I	522-486
Xerxes (son)	486-465
Artaxerxes I (son)	465-424/3
Darius II (son)	423-404
Artaxerxes II (son)	405-359
Artaxerxes III (son)	359-338
Artaxerxes IV (son)	338-336
Darius III (second cousin)	336-330
Alexander of Macedon	330-323

Darius I carried out important administrative-financial reforms, which facilitated the creation of a stable system of state administration and control over the conquered countries (Dandamaev et al., 1994:97). The Achaemenid Empire developed around a tiny core in the modern southern Iranian province of Fars. The latter was called Parsa in Old Persian, which was just one of the languages used during the Achaemenid Period (Kuhrt, 2001:93).



As the borders of the empire expanded, a constellation of different cultural groups and civilisations in the ancient Near East used different languages and dialects, e.g., Demotic in Egypt; Babylonian in Mesopotamia; Elamite and Old Persian in Persia; Greek, Phrygian, and Lydian in Anatolia; and Aramaic all over the empire (Van de Mieroop, 2016:310).<sup>33</sup>

The three languages used in most of the royal inscriptions were Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian (late Babylonian), which was one of the Akkadian dialects from 600 BCE-100 BCE. Old Persian was an Indo-European language for which an alphabetic cuneiform script was developed under Darius I (Van de Mieroop, 2007:295). Elamite was a non-Indo-European language and probably unrelated to any other languages in the Achaemenid Empire. Akkadian was an East Semitic language spoken in Mesopotamia from 2500 BCE to the first century BCE.

Before the Persian conquest, Aramaic was widely used in the ancient Near East. It is perhaps for this reason that Aramaic was adopted by the conquerors as the most widely used administrative language (Kuhrt, 2001:99). Aramaic was a branch of the Semitic language group and was classified into different groups: Old and Imperial Aramaic; Biblical Aramaic; and Talmudic Aramaic Syriac to modern Aramaic (Rubio, 2006:83-91).

During his reforms, Darius I realised that the Achaemenid Empire was, in a sense, a synthesis of different traditions. The empire inherited certain structures, ideas and features from some of their subjects, e.g., from the Babylonian traditions that were predominant; from the Assyrians the very idea of empire; and from the Medes, the important features of court life (Liverani, 2005:18).

#### **2.5.4 Organisation and administration of the empire**

The Achaemenid Empire developed around a tiny core in the modern southern Iranian province of Fars.

Under Darius, the empire was the earliest and largest of the 'known world empires'. In order to control this vast empire, it was essential to operate a highly sophisticated and efficient organisation (Brosius, 2006:47). This was facilitated by Darius I with his excellent organisational ability. He carried out important administrative-financial reforms that created a stable system of state administration and control over the conquered countries (Dandamaev & Lukonin, 1989:97).

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<sup>33</sup> An isolated find in Afghanistan of 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Aramaic documents written on wood and leather shows how the administration extended throughout the territory (Van de Mieroop, 2016:310).



#### 2.5.4.1 *Satrapes and Satrapies*

From the time of Cyrus II the Great and Cambyses, the term ‘satrap’ is firmly attested. A satrap was first and foremost the personal representative of the king and was charged with missions in a specific territory – the satrapy. According to Wiesehöfer (2001:61), ‘it is not always easy to define a person as a satrap’. Satraps are sometimes referred to by different names in Western sources. However, Darius I himself refers to Dādarši as the satrap in Bactria (DB 10-19) and Vivāna as the satrap in Arachosia. Satraps (‘protectors of the kingdom’) oversaw administration and defence, not imperial expansion. A satrap had to adhere closely to the orders received from the central authority and remained accountable to that authority. To maintain order, satraps were given military and civil command by the king, and they were able to rely on garrisons (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1995:1042; Briant, 2002:64-65). As a mere civilian governor, the satrap stood at the head of the administration of their own region; exercised judicial authority; kept track of the economic life of the country, the receipt of the taxes and fulfilment of duties; provided for security within the limits of the borders of their own satrapy; and supervised the local civil servants and possessed the right to mint silver coinage (Dandamaev et al., 1994:101). Satraps also had to send the king a fixed tribute from tax income (Klinkott, 2005:267). The best-known example of the administration of a satrap, namely that of Gubāru, shows that the satrap exchanged extensive correspondence not just with the central authority but also with all of his underlings and perhaps also with officials of other satrapies (provinces) (Briant, 2002:66).

A satrapy was a territory over which a satrap was given military and civil command by the king (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1995:1042). The satrapies, which had been introduced by Cyrus II and Cambyses, were revised and improved by Darius I.

What was the difference(s) between a satrapy and a province? Regular attempts have been made to determine what the classification system looked like for satrapies and provinces during certain periods. The same applies to ‘satrap’ and ‘governor’. Lists of subject peoples are found in some royal inscriptions (Briant, 2002:173), but they do not cover the whole empire and are baffling in their diversity: no record resembles another (Wiesehöfer, 2001:60). The list of satrapies (provinces) mentioned by Herodotus (III, 90-95) only partially corresponds to the lists of the countries of the Achaemenid Empire contained in the *Bisitun* and other royal inscriptions (Dandamaev et al., 1994:98). There is also nothing to indicate that the lists in question were those of administrative units. Proper lists of satrapies have only been handed down from post-Achaemenid times (Wiesehöfer, 2001:61). The question is how did they decide which satrapies

should be mentioned? It is unclear what influenced the decision to mention certain satrapies and ignore others.

#### *2.5.4.2 Taxes*

Cyrus and Cambyses did not prescribe any taxes – only gifts were collected. When Darius came into power, he established a tax-collecting system and kept account of everything (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 1995:1039).

The variety of taxes seem considerable, and the king received a high income from these taxes. The distinction between tax and tribute is not always clear.

Provincial taxes were collected, and most of it stored in the satrapal capital. The rest were sent on to the central capital city. Taxes paid in precious metals, usually silver, were kept in reserve for when it was required for exceptional expenditure (Kuhrt, 2001:115). Other metals like iron from Ionia and the Lebanon; copper from Cyprus; and semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli and carnelian from Sogdiana and turquoise from Chorasmia were also taxed (Briant, 2002:399-400). Some taxes were in kind and could be used directly to maintain and feed local garrisons.<sup>34</sup>

A recently published Aramaic document records the inspection, registration, and taxation of ships that entered and left Egypt. There might have been Phoenician boats among them, although there is no mention of Phoenician trade ships in the taxation lists. Wood and wine came from ports in Asia Minor and Phoenicia, and the cargo was levied with ten percent of each product carried (Briant 2002:385).

#### *2.5.4.3 Roads*

Roads were part of a good infrastructure in the empire, and they were a crucial factor ensuring the smooth running of the empire (Brosius, 2006:53). The royal roads themselves were safe to travel by as they never left inhabited country. There was no risk of neither famine nor ambush (Briant, 2002:364). The Achaemenids drew on an already existing road system that connected Asia Minor and Assyria as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE. The system was extended by the Achaemenids to connect the main cities and the satrapal and royal centres across the empire (Graf, 1994:6; Brosius, 2006:53; cf. Map 2.11).

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<sup>34</sup> The soldiers at Elephantine and their families were entitled to draw rations from their provincial storehouse (Kuhrt, 2001:115).



**Map 2.11 The road system of the Achaemenid Empire (Bowler-Spohnholz & Sayavong, n.d.)**

The Royal Road from Sardis in the west and Susa, the king's capital city, was 2500 km long (Van de Mieroop, 2007:297). This distance could be travelled in 90 days, according to Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1995:1043). The *parasang* was a Persian unit for a distance of 5-6 km. The Achaemenids maintained road stations/waystations (caravanserais) at regular intervals of 25-30 km (stages in the journey). Food and shelter were available at these stations (Brosius, 2006:54). When a courier was on urgent state business, he could also get a new mount. Only individuals bearing a sealed authorisation from the king or a recognised official were allowed to use the facilities at a road station. These messengers of the king also received a daily ration of flour and wine to which they were entitled (Brosius, 2006:56). At strategic points, such as river crossings and mountain passes, soldiers guarded the road and monitored the travellers. The maintaining of the supplies and guardposts was the responsibility of the satraps since communication was crucial for efficient government (Kuhrt, 2001:116).

#### 2.5.4.4 Postal system

Messengers and their transport animals were in the service of the king and his officials to carry messages to and from the king (Brosius, 2006:56). With an infrastructure in place, as described above, Darius established a complex and efficient postal system.

#### 2.5.4.5 Naval routes

Although most traffic passed overland, naval routes also existed. Phoenecian and Cilician trade ships docked off the eastern Mediterranean. Another naval route was from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Oman and from there via the Indian Ocean to the mouth of the River Indus (Brosius, 2006:57). Darius I improved the maritime routes by building a canal that connected the Red Sea with the Nile Delta (Brosius, 2006:20).

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

Geography and topography determined the environment where migrating tribes from the Indo-European homeland would settle. The migration of different tribes was a gradual process and took place over a long period. Some people moved to the west and others to the south (present-day Iran). The fauna and flora that could be domesticated were also determining factors for the settlement of the nomads in a specific area. This provided the necessary commodities to ensure survival in a certain area.

By the time the movement of tribes started, the temperature in the north was dropping rapidly, and people started moving in a southerly direction; certain animals were domesticated; wagons and carts were in use and were drawn by oxen or horses. From the archaeological evidence, the material culture of the peoples can be deduced. With this knowledge, one can now draw a fairly clear picture of the migration of groups of people – where they came from, the way they obtained their livelihood and their culture and religion.

By the time Darius I came to power in 522 BCE, he was very lenient towards the different subject peoples and allowed them to speak their own language, continue with their own culture and religion and in some cases, like Babylon, used some of their administrative organisation. Be it as it may, Darius had a mammoth task to organise and administer such a vast area and varied subject peoples in his empire. He used the system of satrapies governed by satraps instituted by his predecessors, Cyrus II and his son Cambyses. Darius refined the system and brought in a tax system. For communication with the officials throughout the empire, the road system was expanded, and it reached all the corners of the empire.

After almost 200 years, the empire started to decline when the rule of Artaxerxes I was terminated by his death in 424 BCE. The greatest empire the world had seen was conquered by Alexander the Great of Macedon in, 330 BCE and he was still busy in the empire when he died in 323 BCE.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PERSEPOLIS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The new dynastic centre, Persepolis, was founded by the builder-king, Darius I, fairly early in his reign (c. 518 BCE) and was one of his royal building projects. It was a recast of the old city of Susa, which was a distinctly Persian city (Kuhrt 2001:103).

When speaking of Persepolis today, the terrace<sup>35</sup> is usually a reference point. Structures on the terrace include monumental gates and some of the buildings like the Apadana, the Hall of 100 Columns (Throne Hall), and the Treasury, which will feature in the discussions in this and further chapters.

In this chapter, certain aspects of Persepolis will be discussed, such as the name of the complex and the dating of the building program of the city itself. The latter will investigate the construction of the terrace and some of the buildings. The plan of the site, as well as the material used by different craftsmen and labourers, will also be discussed. The staircase, the Apadana, the Hall of 100 Columns (Throne Hall), and the Treasury will receive special attention.

#### 3.2 NAME OF THE COMPLEX

##### 3.2.1 Parsa

This name has only been found on the platform itself (Wilber, 1969:18). Xerxes wrote the ancient name, Parsa, in his trilingual inscription on the Gate of All Lands (Mousavi, 2012:9; cf. Fig. 3.10). It is not clear whether the name 'Parsa' designates the terrace specifically or whether it also includes its immediate surroundings. According to Shahbazi (2011:9), Parsa was also the name of the province in which Persepolis was built. If this is the case, it corresponds with the province of Fars in present-day Iran and will then also include the site of Naqsh-e Rostam.

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<sup>35</sup> A complex of buildings on a raised platform (Waters, 2014:141) which, according to Shahbazi, covered 125 000 m<sup>2</sup> (Shahbazi, 2011:17).

### 3.2.2 Persepolis

It is generally assumed that Persepolis is a Greek rendition of a name meaning the ‘city of the Persians’. This is not correct because the Greek rendition should be *Persaipolis*, not *Persepolis*. The latter actually means ‘destroyer of cities’ (Shahbazi, 2011:9).

The Greeks only became aware of Persepolis after the conquest of Alexander (331 BCE), and they regarded Susa as the Persian capital during the reign of Xerxes. It is most surprising that the Greeks remained ignorant of such a site where numerous Greek Ionian craftsmen were employed during the construction of the buildings at Persepolis (Boucherlat, 2013:512). It is also surprising that some of the eminent Greek authors like Herodotus and Ctesias, a Greek physician who spent fifteen years at the court of Artaxerxes I never set eyes on Persepolis (Mousavi, 2012:9) or mentioned it in their writings. Aeschylus (c. 525-456 BCE), a Greek playwright, uses the name *Perseptolis* which could be a wordplay or a mistranslation. Xenophon used the word *Persai* (Olmstead, 1959:173).

In the ancient Near East, the name Persepolis became widely accepted by members of the Achaemenid kingdom. After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, the name changed to *Takht-e Jamshid* (Jamshid’s Palace).<sup>36</sup>

In 164 BCE, the locality retained sufficient importance to be plundered by a Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanus (Mousavi, 2012:10). The name Persepolis no longer existed after an interval of Seleucid dominion. After that, Persepolis became a forgotten city until it was rediscovered by different travellers (cf. 3.7).

### 3.3 THE FOUNDING AND DATING OF THE SITE OF PERSEPOLIS

Despite already having three capital cities, Babylon, Ecbatana, and Susa, Darius sought a new site for a new capital. He decided on a site at the foot of the Mountain of Mercy, Kuh-i Ramat, on the eastern side of a vast, fertile plain located 1770 m above sea level, the Marv Dasht (Frye, 1984:8). Darius chose this impressive setting for Persepolis in the heart of the Achaemenid homeland, Parsa (cf. 3.2.1). From a distance, the buildings on the terraces were clearly visible, and the ruins remain an unbelievable sight in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, when looking towards the south, some of the ruins of the Apadana and Darius’ palace at Persepolis are visible (cf. Fig. 3.1).

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<sup>36</sup> Jamshid, a mythical king or hero of the Persians, was known for his social organisation, advancement in culture, and the building of palaces (Shahbazi, 2011:9).



**Fig. 3.1 Remaining pillars of the Apadana and ruins of the palace of Darius at Persepolis**

In ancient times, a caravan route passed this way from the Persian Gulf to the oasis of Shiraz and further on to the oasis of Isfahan (Walser, 1980:7). This meant that a trade route was available for the new city.

### **3.3.1 Founding of Persepolis**

Today, it is generally accepted that Darius I founded the city of Persepolis (Farkas, 1974:46). The inscription of Darius on the present upper edge of the south façade of the terrace bears witness to this.

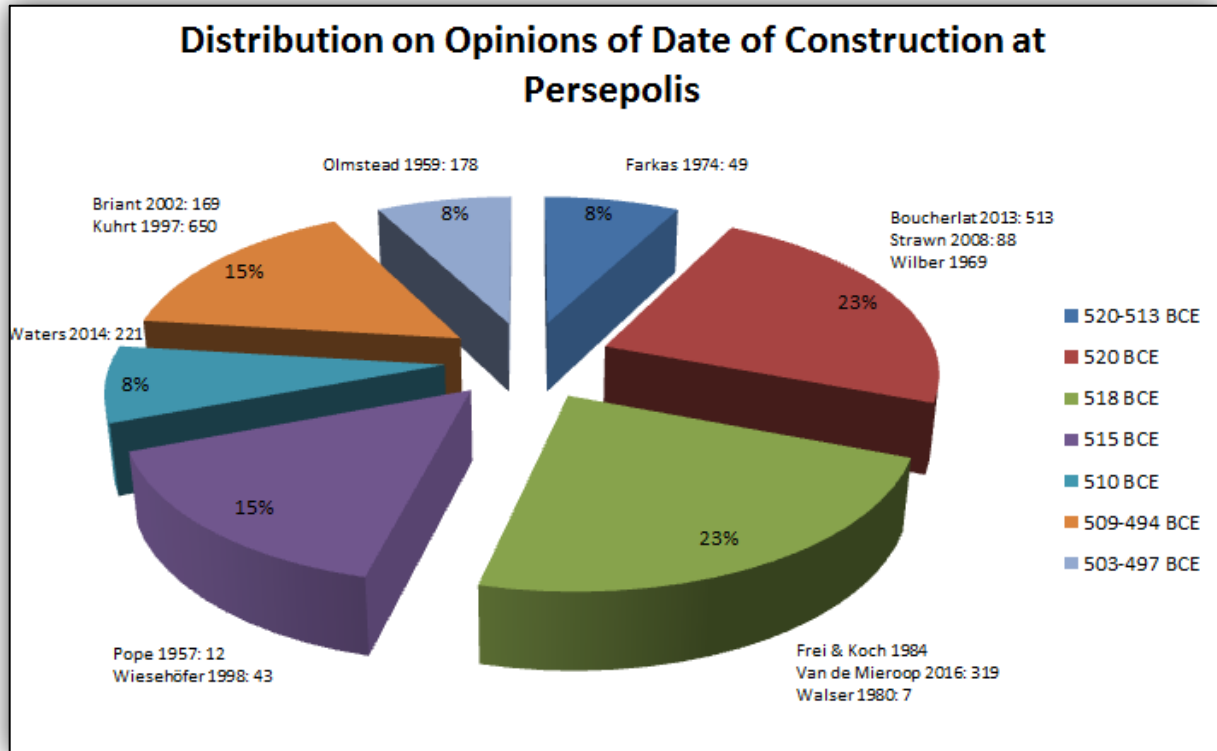
And Darius king says: As for the fact that upon this place this fortress was built, formerly here a fortress had not been built. By the grace of Ahuramazada I built this fortress (Schmidt, 1953:63).

According to Farkas (1974:46), Darius was responsible for the general plan of the entire site. However, Wilber (1969:43) gives credit to an unknown architect or engineer who executed and supervised the work for Darius.

### **3.3.2 Dating of the founding of Persepolis**

There are controversial debates among scholars with regard to the dating of the different buildings at Persepolis (Schmidt, 2015:150).





**Chart 3.1 Possible construction dates at Persepolis as determined by different scholars**

Chart 3.1 indicates that, over the years, no consensus regarding the dating of Persepolis has been reached among scholars. The chart shows the commencement dates given by different scholars for the building project at Persepolis.

### 3.4 CONSTRUCTION ON THE SITE

Preliminary operations had to be accomplished before the building project could commence (Wilber, 1969:43; Mousavi, 2012:10). This resulted in raising a monumental platform that would eventually cover 125,000 m<sup>2</sup> upon completion (Briant, 2002:168). This process took place in stages. In terms of waterways, an underground water channel system, the so-called qanat system (Kuhrt, 1997:700), was planned and built to serve the whole of Persepolis (cf. Fig. 2.1). Part of the elaborate water system is still preserved in places on the terrain and, after many centuries, still help to prevent the accumulation of rainwater in the excavated areas (Shahbazi, 2011:18). A water cistern was dug into the rocky hillside to a depth of 24 m (cf. Fig.2.2).

The ravines and hollows of the platform were filled in by stones brought from adjacent quarries and material obtained after levelling the spurs of rock from the base of the ‘Mountain of Mercy’.

On the extensive platform, terraces of different heights were erected as the building project proceeded (Briant, 2002:68; Shahbazi, 2011:17).

The chronology of this project is problematic. It is generally accepted that during the reign of Darius I, several buildings were conceived but were constructed and completed by his son and successor, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I, his grandson (Briant, 2002:168-169). However, Erich Schmidt (1953:70) argued that the trilingual Foundation inscriptions (DPh) demonstrated that the structure was not only planned by Darius I, but that its construction was also begun under him (Strawn, 2008:88). According to Van de Mieroop (2016), Xerxes and Artaxerxes I turned Persepolis into the most grandiose expression of imperial rule.

### 3.4.1 The workers

Centuries-old archival traditions in the Near East are reflected in the sophisticated record-keeping system in the administration at Persepolis. This became clear after the discovery of the Fortification Tablets (*PFT*) in Persepolis (cf. 1.4.3). Even today, this is a testimony of a highly developed society.

When these Tablets were deciphered and analysed, it became clear that workers were summoned from different parts of the empire (Briant, 2002:88). Such workers included Babylonians, Egyptians, and Ionian Greeks. Unskilled workers, craftsmen with special skills, and men, as well as whole families (men, women, and children), were among the employed workforces.<sup>37</sup> Thousands of these administrative texts from Persepolis, which were preserved from Darius' reign, confirm the fact that the construction of Persepolis was indeed a multinational enterprise (Root 1979:670).

From the Fortification Tablets (*PFT*), the following deductions can be made. Among these groups, some were unqualified people while others were highly specialised and skilled craftsmen. The latter included stonemasons, gold- and silversmiths, and workers with expertise in precious stone. In the Persepolis Treasury tablets stone, makers who were 'sculptors of stone' and woodworkers are mentioned (Roaf, 1980:66; *PTT* 1957–1).

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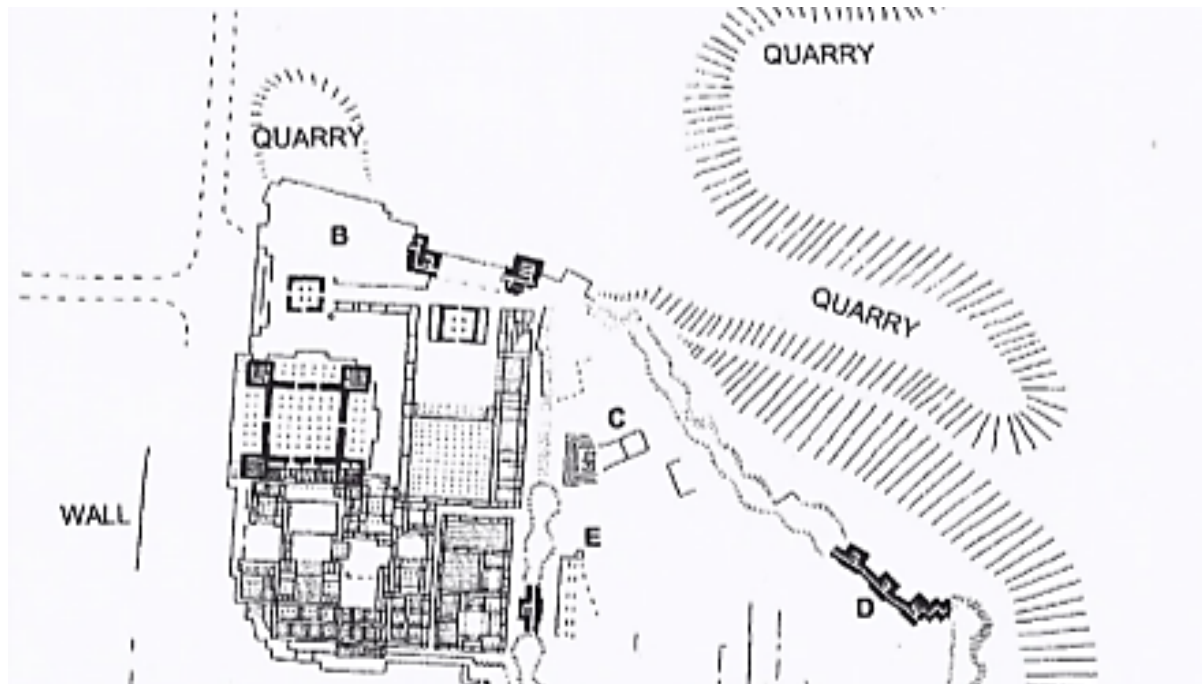
<sup>37</sup> Ongoing research is still being done on these tablets at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. The project is called the *PFA* (Persepolis Fortification Archive) (Stolper, 2009:104-11).

The workers of Persepolis were among the recipients of foodstuffs recorded in the Fortification Tablets. They received monthly food rations as payment for their work. These rations were worked out according to their level of qualification within their profession. Parnaka, Darius' uncle, was the head of the administration and was assisted by a core of capable men. They authorised the distribution of foodstuffs from the royal storehouse (Brosius, 2006:51-52).

Not only did workers at Persepolis receive rations, but provision was also made for messengers who travelled certain distances. Cultic functionaries also received rations, e.g., for sacrifices (Kuhrt, 1997:650).

### 3.4.2 Materials used

*Stone* was the material primarily used in the building project. Blocks of stone of irregular shapes and sizes were quarried from the mountain (Kuh-i Ramat) itself or at nearby quarries with a very tedious but effective method (cf. Fig. 3.2).



**Fig. 3.2 Quarries close to the Persepolis complex (Roaf, 2004:18)**

A higher quality of limestone used for the reliefs on buildings, e.g., on the walls of staircases and door jambs, was quarried about 30 km away from the building site (Boucherlat, 2013:515). Deep grooves were cut with metal tools into the exposed rock surfaces, and wooden wedges were driven

into them. The wedges were then soaked with water. The wood swelled, and the rock was split away (Wilber, 1969:43-44).

The stone, a very hard limestone, contained bitumen and ranged in colour from brown to grey to black (Wilber, 1969:43).<sup>38</sup> The blocks of rock were carefully dressed, bedded, and joined in quite irregular courses.

At the building site, they were fitted together with the precision of a jigsaw puzzle by stonemasons (cf. Fig. 3.3). No mortar was used, and the stones were held together by swallow-tail clamps of lead or iron (Olmstead, 1959:173; Wilber, 1969:43).

A number of additional materials, apart from stone, were also used during the building process and were obtained from different parts of the empire (cf. Table 3.1 adapted from Kent 1953, DSf 22-58 and Kuhrt, 1997:669-670).

**Table 3.1 Additional materials used during the construction of Persepolis**

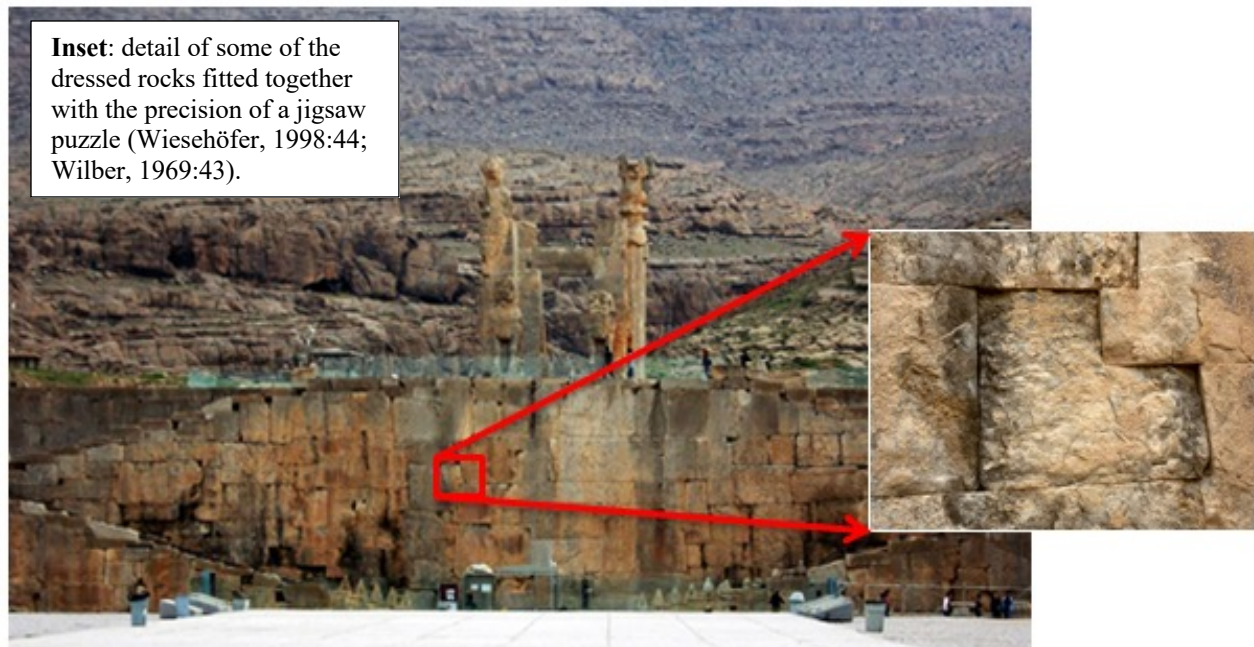
<b>Material</b>	<b>Place of origin</b>
<b>Sundried bricks</b>	Made on-site by the Babylonian people
<b>Cedar timber</b>	From Lebanon
<b>Yaka timber</b>	Gandara (Kabul region) and Carmania
<b>Gold</b>	Egypt, Sardis and Bactria
<b>Lapis – lazuli and carnelian</b>	Sogdiana (Uzbekistan / Tadjikistan)
<b>Turquoise</b>	Chorasmia (lower Oxus)
<b>Silver and ebony</b>	Egypt
<b>Ornamentation with which the walls were adorned</b>	Ionia
<b>Ivory</b>	Kush (Nubia), India, Arachosia, Kandahar region

<sup>38</sup> The almost black limestone was obtained from Majdabad about 40 km west of Persepolis (Shahbazi, 2011:18).

### 3.4.3 Construction of different entities on the terrace

#### 3.4.3.1 Retaining wall

A retaining wall was necessary to retain the soil and rocks from the newly constructed platform. A 14 m high wall was erected from blocks of stone of irregular shapes and sizes (cf. Fig. 3.3).



**Fig. 3.3** View on approach to the site at Persepolis: retaining wall, remains of the Gate of All Lands with the Kuh-i Ramat in the background

#### 3.4.3.2 Staircase

To reach the platform, Xerxes, Darius' son and successor, built a monumental double reversing stairway on the north-western part of the platform (cf. Figs. 3.4.1 & 3.4.2). This provided the only formal access to the royal complex (Bryce, 2009:539). The staircase had a gentle slope, and the flights had a total of 111 wide and low steps with 63 steps to each landing and another 48 steps to the terrace (Mousavi, 2012:16; Wilber, 1969:49). The steps were so low and broad (and still is) that ten men could pass abreast. According to Olmstead (1959:176), a procession of horses could be ridden to the broad landing at the top. This mentioning of 'men on horseback' could just have been a figure of speech to indicate the accessibility of such a monumental stairway.





**Fig. 3.4.1 Two rows of the double reversing staircase and Gate of All Lands**



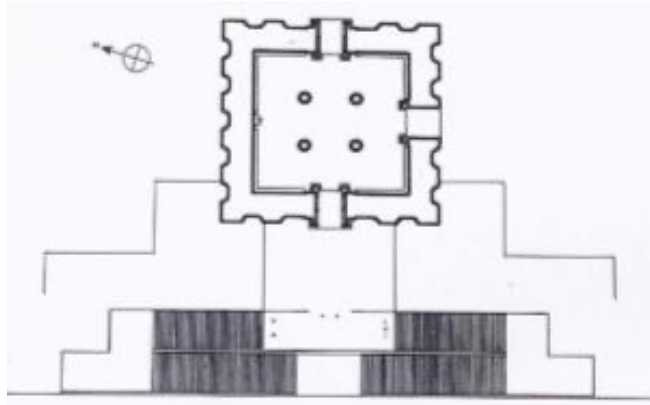
**Fig. 3.4.2 Stairway and Gate of All Lands recreated (Rezaeian, 2004:21)**

### 3.4.3.3 *Gate of All Lands*

While working through the available literature, many names were used, by different scholars, for the same entrance hall built by Xerxes (cf. Table 3.2). Throughout this study, the name ‘Gate of All Lands’ will be used.

**Table 3.2 Some of the names given to the entrance gate to Persepolis as cited by different authors**

<b>Name of entrance gate</b>	<b>Authors cited</b>
<b>Gate of All Lands</b>	Mousavi, 2012:9; Shahbazi, 2011:9; Wilber, 1969:11; Wiesehöfer, 2001:21.
<b>Gate of All Nations</b>	Boucherlat, 2013:514; Pope, 1957:126; Rezaeian, 2004:22; Strawn, 2008:88.
<b>Gatehouse of Xerxes</b>	Ghirsham, 1964:155 & 208.
<b>Gatehouse</b>	Farkas, 1974:46.
<b>Gate of Xerxes</b>	Waters, 2014:141.



**Fig. 3.5 The Gate of All Lands (Shahbazi, 2011:38)**

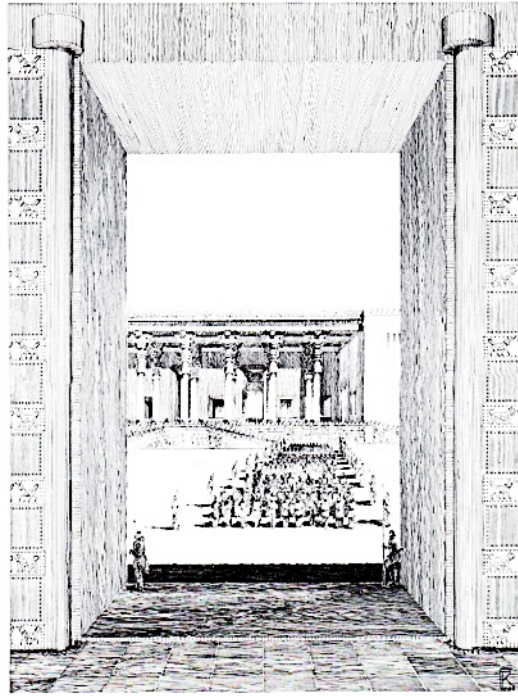
The Gate of All Lands was a monumental, square, four-columned hall built by Xerxes, probably between 490 and 470 BCE (Shahbazi, 2011:38; cf. Fig. 3.5). It was inspired by the pattern of the massive ruins of Neo-Assyrian gates from Nineveh and other cities from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE<sup>39</sup> (Wieschöfer, 1995:44; Allen, 2005:175; Waters, 2014:141). A double reversing staircase provided access to the building.

There were three large doors. Koch's illustration of one such a door, with guards, gives an idea of the height of such a door (cf. Fig. 3.6). Dignitaries, representatives of other nations, members of the court, and other people passed through this hall and were then led to the audience halls (the Apadana and the 100 Column Hall) (Shahbazi, 2011:37). 'Guardian bulls' with the body of a bull, the wings of an eagle, and crowned by a bearded man (*lamassu*) decorate the western side of the gateway (Boucherlat, 2013:514; cf. Figs. 3.6 & 3.7). The opposite side of the gate is formed by human-headed figures.<sup>40</sup> The figures both wore a high feather crown and had a square-cut beard. The crown was decorated with feathers and rosettes (cf. Figs. 3.8 & 3.9).

<sup>39</sup> King Sennacherib ruled in Nineveh from 705-681 BCE.

<sup>40</sup> The human faces were defaced by Muslim raiders.





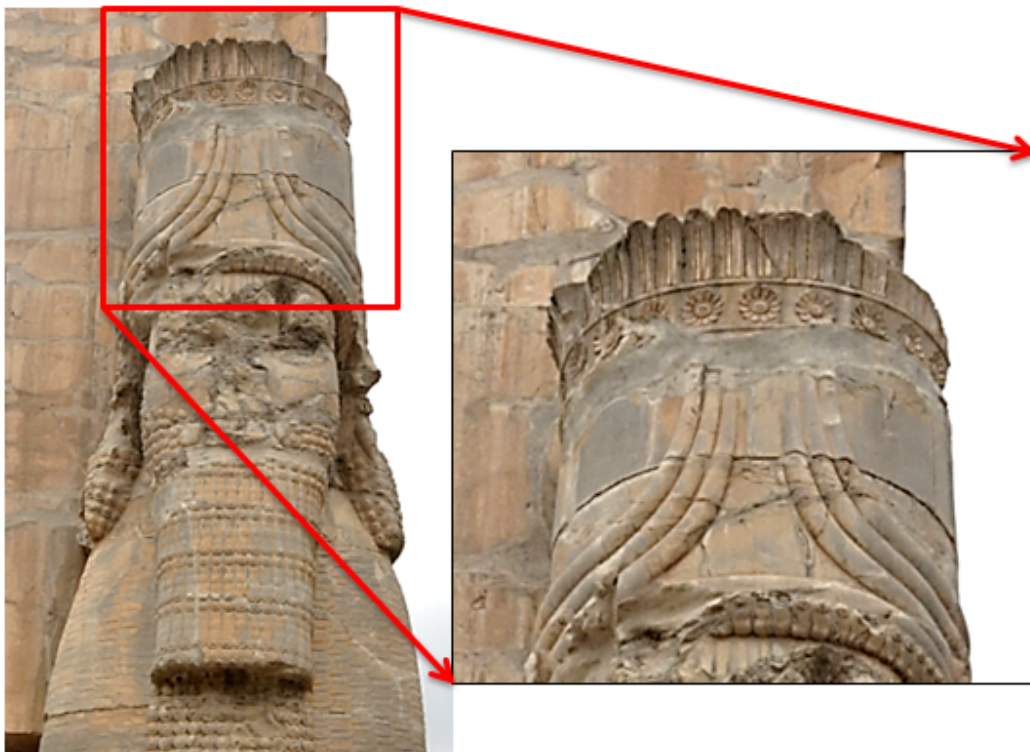
**Fig. 3.6 View through the southern door of the Gate of All Lands towards the northern side of the Apadana (Koch, 2001:27)**



**Fig. 3.7 Human-headed winged bull (lamassu), Palace of Sargon II (721-705 BCE) at Khorsabad (OIM A7369; D28171)**



**Fig. 3.8 Remains of the Gate of All Lands**



**Fig. 3.9 Human-headed bull on the eastern side of the gate**

Above each of the wings of the ‘Guardian Bulls’, on the inner wall of the building, there is a trilingual inscription by Xerxes (cf. Fig. 3.10). Each side has three texts: the middle one is in Old Persian, the one nearer the outer face of the doorway is in Elamite, and the third one closer to the hall is in Babylonian.



**Fig. 3.10 Old Persian text above the wing of a ‘Guardian Bull’ on a stone jamb of the gateway**

A translation of the trilingual inscriptions reads as follows:

A great god (is) Ahuramazda who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Xerxes king, one king of many, one lord of many. I (am) Xerxes the great king, king of kings, king of countries possessing many kinds of people, king of this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius the king, the Achaemenid.

Says Xerxes the great king: By the grace of Ahuramazda, this ‘Gate of All Lands’ I made; much (that is) beautiful(was) done throughout Parsa which I did and which my father did; whatever work seems beautiful, all that we did by the grace of Ahuramazda (Shahbazi, 2011:40-41).

The four columns with vertical volutes and bull capitals supported the roof of the building and were similar to the pillars found in some of the other buildings in the complex with slight differences here and there, e.g., height. There were also stone benches around the inner room where visitors of rank could await their summons (Olmstead, 1959; Roaf, 2003-2005:401).

#### *3.4.3.4 Apadana*

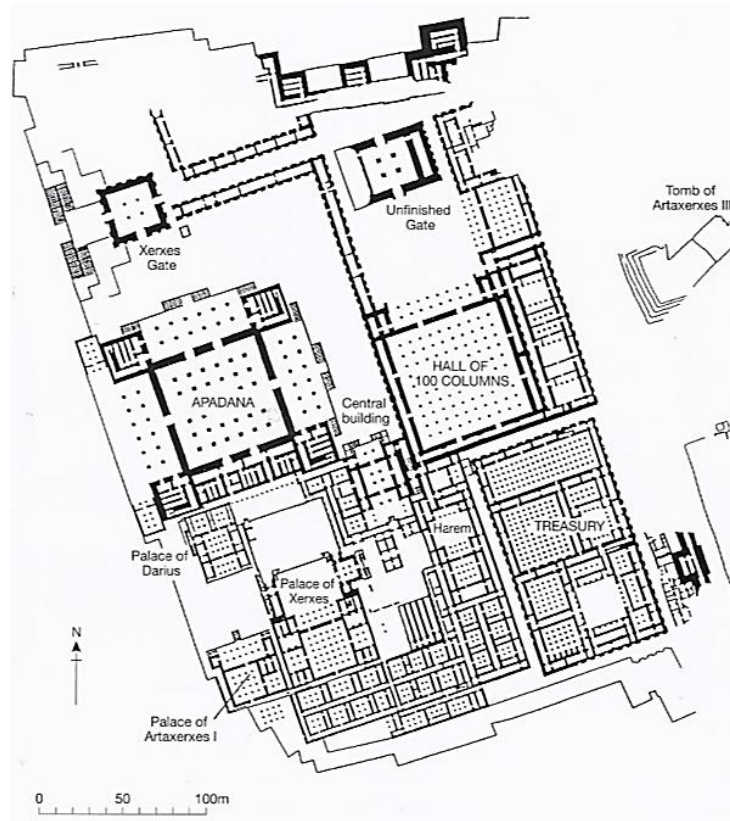
The Apadana was located to the southeast of the Gate of All Lands. It was built on a terrace raised 2.5 m high above the platform (Mousavi, 2012:17), and it was surrounded by a number of buildings as indicated in Figs. 3.11 and 3.12 below.

The Apadana was the largest building and most impressive at Persepolis. This great audience hall of the Achaemenid kings could accommodate 10 000 people. It consisted of a square room



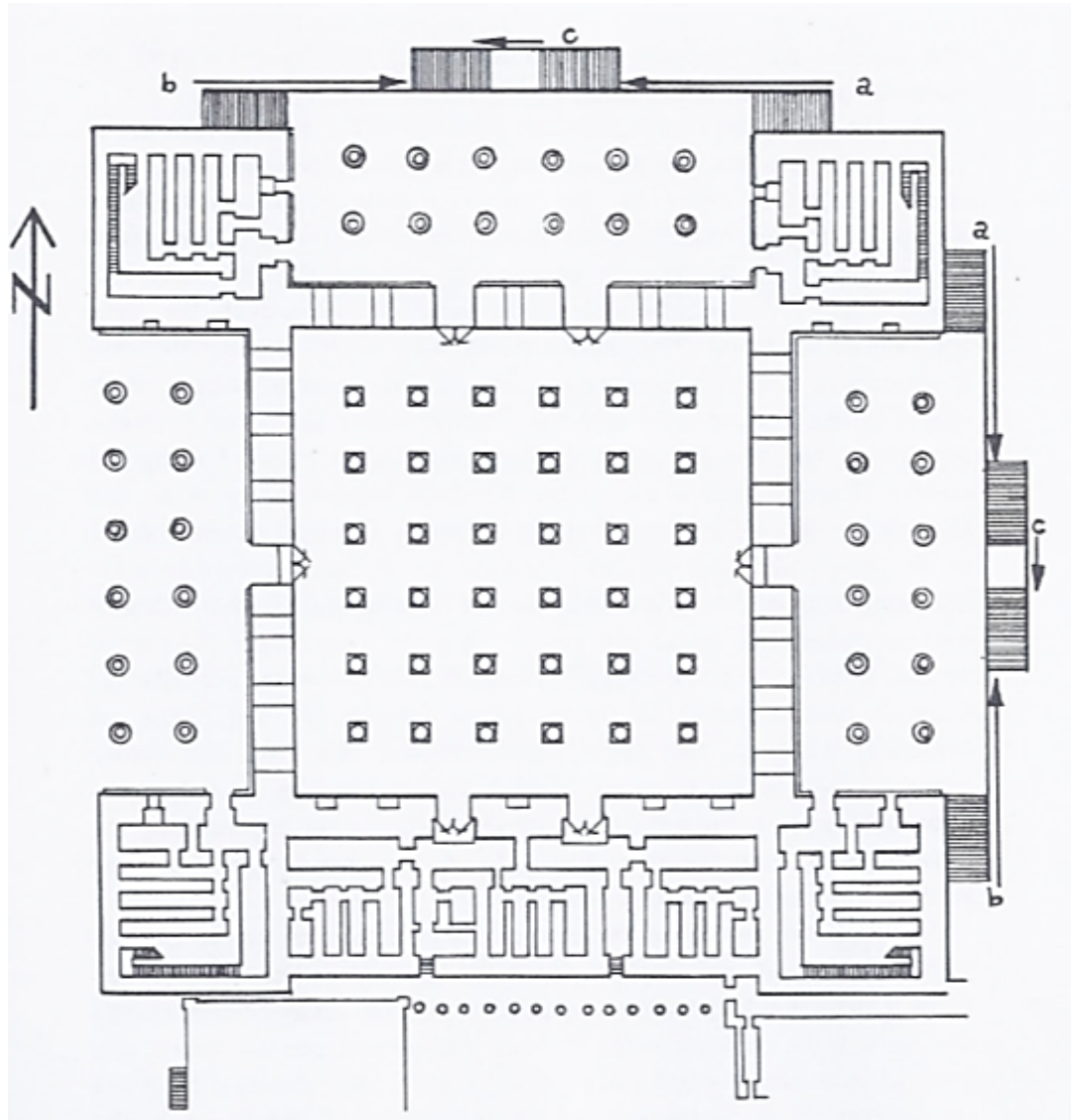
measuring 53 x 53 m with six rows of six columns each (36 columns in total) (Boucherlat, 2013:74). Thick walls, made from mud brick, enclosed the sides of the main hall. Torches were lit to supply the interior with light (Dandamaev & Lukonin, 1989:250). Double reversed staircases were used to access the Apadana. The northern and eastern façades of the staircases were decorated with relief sculptures (Roaf, 2003-2005:403). The reliefs on the eastern façade will be discussed in Chapters Six to Eight.

After the porticos, on the northern, eastern, and western sides, and the service rooms on the southern side were added to the Apadana, the overall plan was a square 109 x 109 m. The ceiling of the main hall and the surrounding porticos was supported by 72 stone columns<sup>41</sup> (Shahbazi, 2011:54). This was an excellent example of a hypostyle building that answered the need to cover a broad area without intermediate supporting walls. The resultant plan was not unlike that of a great tent – familiar enough to folk with a nomadic past (Boardman, 2000:61).



**Fig. 3.11 Plan of the structures on the platform at Persepolis before the destruction in 330 BCE**  
(Allen, 2005:77)

<sup>41</sup> Only 14 (one re-assembled) of the 72 columns are still standing (Shahbazi, 2011:54).



**Fig. 3.12 Plan of the Apadana (Root, 1979:87)**

The size of the Apadana required tall columns of stone to support the roof. These columns were 20 m high and had to have a large circumference (cf. Fig. 3.13.1). The columns consisted of different parts (cf. Figs. 3.13.1-3.13.3):

- (i) Base (cf. Fig. 3.13.2). Darius I introduced a new alternative to the familiar plain torus on a two-stepped plinth, namely a base that resembled a bell splayed on the ground and elaborately carved (cf. Fig. 3.13.3). The patterns on the bases are more in the Greek idiom than that of the Assyrians or Egyptians, and they seem to betray an awareness of Greek patterns (Boardman, 2000:68).

- (ii) Shaft. The shafts of the columns were normally fluted with the flutes closely set - up to 48 flutes<sup>42</sup> and had the expected torus below (cf. Fig. 3.13.2).
- (iii) Capital (cf. Figs. 3.14.1, 3.14.2 & 3.14.3). The stone capitals, topping the columns of the Apadana, were a unique, original and carefully conceived design and quite elaborate compared to a Corinthian capital for example.



**Fig. 3.13.1 The human figure (1.6 m) gives an idea of the circumference of a fallen column**

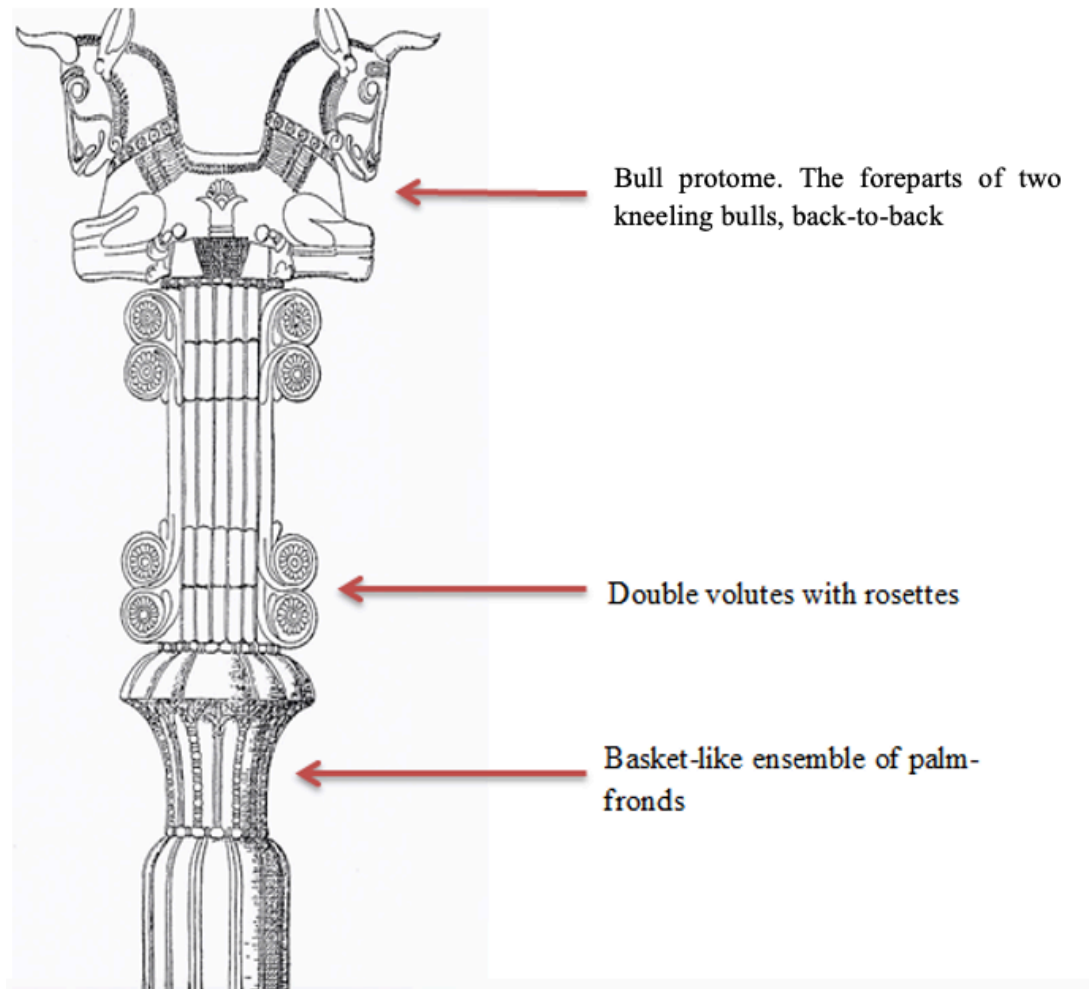


**Fig. 3.13.2 Elaborately carved bell-shaped base. Torus resting on the base. The shaft of the column rests on the torus (Mousavi, 2012:72)**

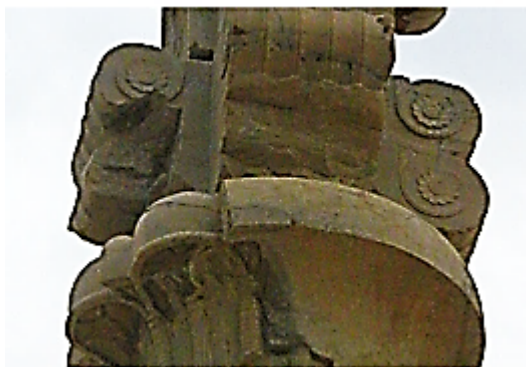


**Fig. 3.13.3 The base of a column restored on the righthand side and damaged (eroded) on the left-hand side**

<sup>42</sup> The shafts of the Greek Ionic columns normally had 24 flutes (Boardman, 2000:68).



**Fig. 3.14.1** The different parts of the capital of a stone column (Boardman, 2000:72)



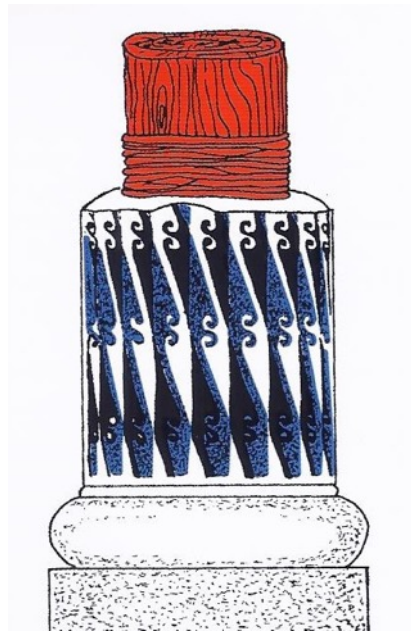
**Fig. 3.14.2** Detail of part of a capital with rosettes on the volutes



**Fig. 3.14.3** Detail of the head of a bull protome with rosettes



A number of large columned halls surrounded by narrow corridors are collectively called the Treasury (cf. Fig. 3.10). The columns had stone plinths. The torus rested on the plinth. The shafts were made of wood covered with plaster and painted in red, blue and white (Frankfort, 1969:221; cf. Fig. 3.15).



**Fig. 3.15 Wood column covered with red, blue and white plaster (Koch, 2006:66)**

The cedar beams of the roof rested in the gap between the heads of the two bulls.<sup>43</sup> The rosettes, as decoration on the double volutes, are repeated in many of the decorations at Persepolis. They even decorated the bulls of the protomes (cf. Fig. 3.14.3).

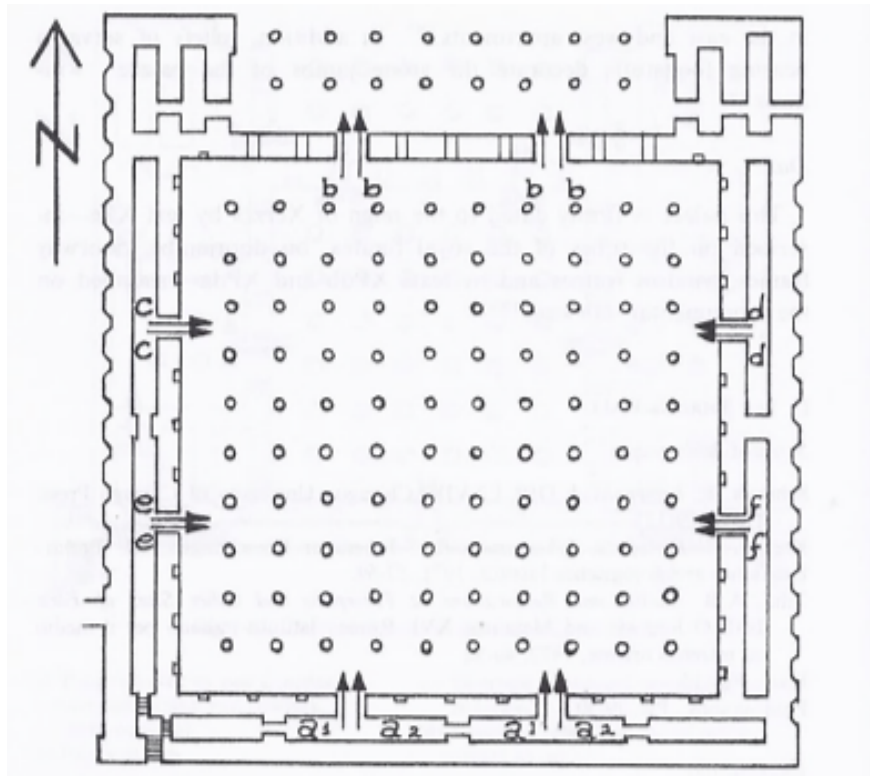
#### *3.4.3.5 Hall of 100 Columns (Throne Hall)*

True to the remarkable, original Achaemenid architecture, columns were again lavishly used in this square room (Frankfort, 1969:218; cf. Fig. 3.15). It was planned by Xerxes and the foundations were laid by him, Artaxerxes I then completed the building (Frankfort, 1969:220; Root, 1979:108; cf. Fig. 3.16).

The Hall of 100 Columns was a massive square (68.50 m), symmetrical structure (cf. Fig. 3.16). It only had one portico on the north side with sixteen pillars. The access to the building was only through the portico. A narrow service passage ran along the other three sides. Each of the four walls had two doors, but there are no traces of any actual doors, e.g., pivot holes (Root, 1979: 105-106). The doorjambs were decorated with reliefs. There were seven stone-framed

<sup>43</sup> Two other types of protomes, also using animals as subjects like the lion and the gryphon, occur on the site at Persepolis but as far as is known they never made it to the top of a column. Human-headed protomes were also created but did make it to the top of a column in some buildings.

windows in the wall between the hall and the portico. In the other three walls, there were niches instead of windows (Frankfort, 1969:220; cf. Fig. 3.17).



**Fig. 3.16 Plan of the Hall of 100 Columns (Throne Hall) (Root, 1979:106)**



**Fig. 3.17 Part of the ruins of the Hall of 100 Columns with the remains of one of the doors, a number of niches and column remains with part of the Kuh-I Ramat in the background**

#### *3.4.3.6 The Treasury*

The Treasury, which included the royal storehouse and armoury (Frankfort, 1969:220), was probably one of the oldest buildings of the complex (Mousavi, 2012:19). A number of large

columned halls surrounded by narrow corridors are collectively called the Treasury (cf. Fig. 3.18).



**Fig. 3.18 The Treasury (Allen, 2005:77)**

During excavations at Persepolis,<sup>44</sup> many hundreds of administrative tablets were found as well as the centre panels of the northern and eastern stairways<sup>45</sup> of the Apadana. Thousands of arrowheads, javelins, and other weapons were also discovered, which is an indication that part of the Treasury was used as an armoury.

### 3.5 FUNCTION OF PERSEPOLIS

Darius I apparently saw the need for a new capital. The recording of the material remnants tell us very little about the function of the new city, Persepolis. There is also no consensus among scholars regarding the function(s) of this city. According to Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1991:1), the analyses of meaning and function are still very much dependent on the individual researcher's bias. Table 3.3 summarises some of the theories about the function of Persepolis that have been put forth by scholars in the last 60 years.

<sup>44</sup> Teams from the University of Chicago excavated the site from 1931 to 1939. Iranian Archaeological Service later took charge of the remaining unexcavated portions of the site. Between 1964 and 1978, an Italian restoration team worked on the site in collaboration with other scholars (Bryce, 2009:539).

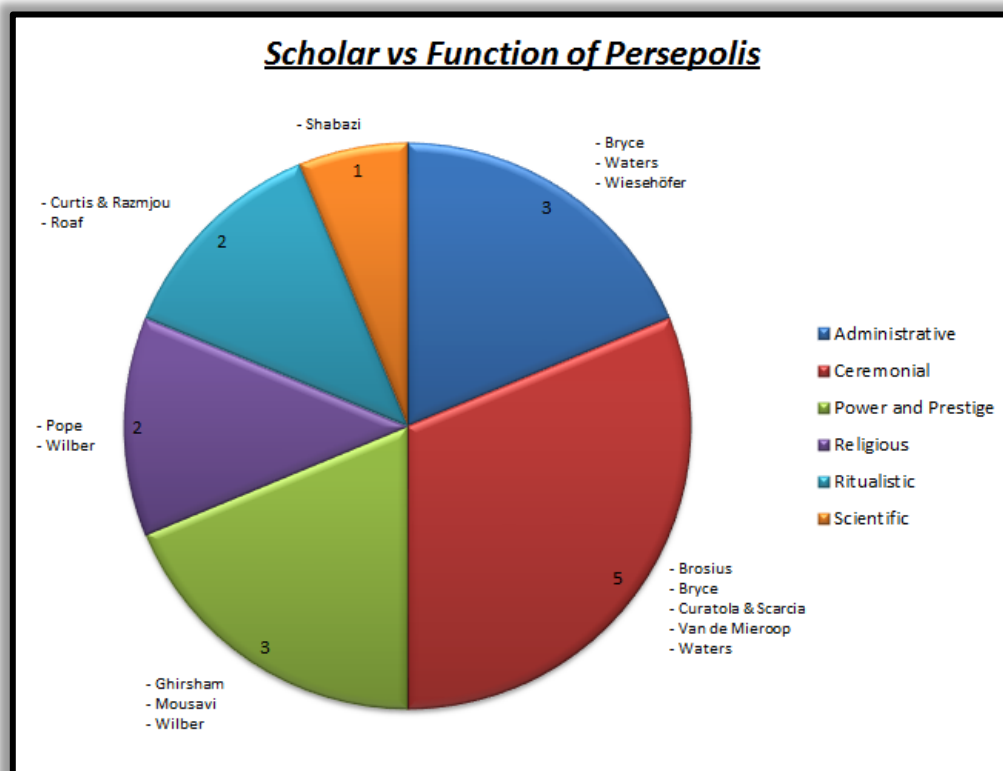
<sup>45</sup> The centre panels became known as the 'Treasury reliefs' or Audience scene. One of these reliefs is still in Persepolis and the other one is in the National Museum of Iran.

**Table 3.3 Theories on the function of Persepolis**

Scholar	Function of Persepolis
<b>Pope (1957:126)</b>	A holy place where one could be within the legitimate spiritual domain of the King of Kings who was the surrogate on earth of the god Ahuramazda.
<b>Ghirsham (1964:147)</b>	Persepolis was neither the diplomatic nor the administrative capital. The king wanted to commensurate the power and prestige of the Persian Empire.
<b>Wilber (1969:2)</b>	Displayed the splendour and majesty of the world's first empire. The repetitious statements of religious piety on the royal inscriptions point to a national, spiritual sanctuary.
<b>Wiesehöfer (2001:21)</b>	A symbol of the Achaemenid concept of empire. Played a part as an administrative centre.
<b>Curatola &amp; Scarcia (2004:42)</b>	The site of springtime New Year's celebrations (Nowruz). Persepolis was the off-season capital (Ecbatana being the summer capital and Susa the winter one).
<b>Curtis &amp; Razmjou (2005:54)</b>	A ritual city
<b>Brosius (2006:75)</b>	A ceremonial function. It was a place where the king received the subjects of his empire.
<b>Bryce (2009:539)</b>	The new administrative capital. Place where coronations, royal burials and other ceremonies and festivals were held.
<b>Shahbazi (2011:12)</b>	An observatory of celestial bodies.
<b>Mousavi (2012:18)</b>	The important visitors were greeted by the king in the Apadana. Seen as a stronghold and a highland capital.
<b>Waters (2014:41)</b>	Seen as both a ceremonial and administrative centre. A focal point of the grandeur of Persian power.
<b>Van de Mieroop (2016:18)</b>	Primarily a ceremonial function connected to the tribute brought from the empire's provinces
<b>Roaf (2004)</b>	A ritual city

On the conversion of Table 3.3 into a pie chart, interesting results come to the fore (cf. Chart 3.2). It is clear that one cannot single out one specific function, although the majority of

scholars favour a ceremonial function. However, one cannot ignore the other functions and therefore one should use the term ‘multiplefunctional’.



**Chart 3.2 The difference of opinion regarding the function of Persepolis**

### 3.6 DESTRUCTION OF PERSEPOLIS

In 330 BCE, Alexander the Great and his army reached Persepolis near the end of his victorious campaign from Macedon eastward, conquering the different subject peoples of the Achaemenid Empire. According to Roman sources, the Treasury was so rich that 10,000 pairs of mules and 5 000 camels were used to remove the contents after the destruction by Alexander (Van de Mieroop, 2016:319).

In 1909, on viewing Persepolis, Bradley-Birt wrote that it was:

A scene of utter desolation, pillars broken and cast down, columns shorn of their summits, pedestals bereft of their columns, mournful, neglected and pathetic, yet magnificent and proud, with all the pride of greatness that has passed away.

He also speaks of their ‘majesty and decay, their mute triumphant protest against the warring hand of time and man’ (Bradley-Birt, 1909:183 & 200-201).

### 3.7 REDISCOVERY OF PERSEPOLIS

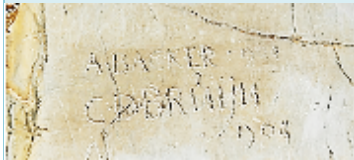

The first reference to the existence of the ruins of the once magnificent city was cited in 1318 – almost a thousand years after its destruction. Table 3.4 gives an overview of some of the

multinational visitors to the site, the date(s) of their visits, their circumstances, and observations. The page references in the table come from Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1991:1-35). Other sources, cited in the table, are mentioned where applicable.

**Table 3.4 Persepolis as seen through travellers' eyes**

<b>14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century</b>			
<b>Odoric of Pordenone</b>	1318	Passed through Fars on his way to China.	Used to be a large town that had caused a lot of damage to the Romans (3).
<b>Josafat Barbaro (Venetian ambassador)</b>	1474	Traveller. He had 'to deal with savage people'.	Description rather vague. Unaware that the site was ancient Persepolis. Described the throne-bearer reliefs and the king who looked like a pope giving his blessings (3-4).
<b>Don Garcias da Silva e Figueroa (Spanish ambassador)</b>	1667	His mission was to visit the ruins of Achaemenid times. He had to make up his mind if the forty columns were representing Persepolis. Was well prepared by his readings of the ancient authors.	An artist was ordered to make sketches. He was better at rendering architectural details than iconographic data. <i>No women displayed</i> . Loose pieces of reliefs lay scattered on the Apadana floor. Decided that this was indeed Persepolis and had to be reckoned among the great marvels of the world (5-6).
<b>Della Valle (Italian aristocrat)</b>	1672	Visitor to Persepolis. Was well prepared by his readings of the ancient authors' works.	Noticed that all people faced the centre of the staircase on the <i>Apadana Reliefs</i> . Also observed the social status of the people on the reliefs. They should be regarded as persons of lower social rank because of their clothing (6). He also observed that the inscriptions ran from left to right (Huart, 1972:13).
<b>Cornelius Speelman (Dutch)</b>	1651	Secretary of the Dutch East India Company. Little personal interest in the site.	Accurate, sober report on the state of the evidence. He often gave the level to which sculptures were hidden by sand and debris (10).
<b>Jean Chardin</b>	1665-1677	Learnt Persian. Became interested in the ancient	Published his observations in a book in Paris in French and



		history of the country. Visited Persepolis three times. One of his main interests was religion.	London in English in 1686. He was convinced that the whole terrace served religious purposes. He was the first to make a <i>plan of the site</i> . This enabled interested Europeans to get at least some understanding of the placing of the various buildings.
<b>Engelbert Kaempfer</b>	1684 & 1688	Visited Persia in the service of the Swedish king, Charles XI.	Worked extremely hard and in 3 days provided more <i>accurate drawings</i> than earlier travellers. Drawings published in 1711. Like most early visitors, Kaempfer had problems with the interpretation of the beasts at the Gate of All Nations.
<b>Cornelis de Bruijn</b> (Dutch) He left his name and date as graffiti on the inner wall of the Gate of All Lands.	1704-1705	Was a trained artist and traveller. Spent a considerable time in the Marv Dasht plain.	He consistently did not draw faces where they were damaged. His trained eye did not prevent him from making mistakes. He believed he could see women on the reliefs. De Bruijn's magnificent series of four drawings from each part of the compass was published in 1712.
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div> <p><b>Chardin, Kaempfer, and De Bruijn had made a wealth of information available. However, the problems were by no means all solved. The main function of the site was still very much under discussion.</b></p>			
<b>John Freyer</b> (British)	1700	English doctor in the service of the East India company.	Compared the throne-bearers with a Greek phalanx. Reported that the people of the reliefs wore clothes more similar to those of ancient Greeks than to those of present-day Persians – 1700s.
<b>Carsten Niebuhr</b> (German)	1761-1767 (Wiesehöfer, 2002:7).	A German scientist and a member of a Danish scientific mission. His visit marked a turning point in research on this site.	Close inspection of the site. He was able to correct the work of his predecessors and <i>paid attention to details</i> . King enthroned by two servants with parasol and fly whisk was a

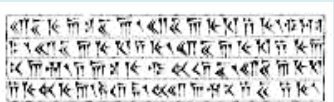




View on 'Gebäude I'  
(Copenhagen 1778)

depiction of some spiritual leader but on the whole, he was undecided whether Persepolis served religious purposes or not. He also contributed greatly to the decipherment of Old Persian. He came to the conclusion that the most frequent 'alphabet' had only 42 characters. He also established that the inscriptions were drafted in three different languages (Huart, 1972:13).

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century

<b>Morier James</b> (British)	1812; 1818	Member of English Embassies. 1. With Sir Harford Jones. 2. With Sir Gore Ouseley.	Excavated at Persepolis. Found some loose fragments of reliefs. If they were too large for transport, he ordered them to be cut up into smaller pieces. Like visitors of the time, he was interested in bringing home parts of antiquity.
<b>G.E. Grotefend</b> (German)	1802-1803	Heidelberg University.  Text A (Xerxes), the ten-word inscription which finally proved to read: "Xerxes, the great king, king of kings, son of Darius, the king, an Achaemenian." (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:27).	Worked on copies of Old Persian cuneiform texts. Distinguished the names of Darius and several of his successors. Triumph of decipherment cut through all speculation. Pointed to the undeniable rediscovery of the Persian capital, the Persepolis of classical accounts. (Meyers, 1997:275).
<b>British Period</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century		The purpose of the buildings became clearer.
<b>How exactly the ruins looked and how they had looked at the height of their glory were questions not yet satisfactorily answered.</b>			
<b>French Period</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century		Intensive excavating took place on Assyrian sites. The rediscovery of Assyrian art could have had an important influence on the interpretation of Achaemenid art.
<b>Texier</b> (French)	1839	Artist.	He made drawings as well as accurate measurements of the height of various monuments. He also realised that the monuments, in

			their original state had been entirely different from the plain stonework we now know. Through chemical experiments, he was able to prove that there had once been <i>paint on the reliefs</i> .
<b>20th Century</b>			
<b>Ernst Herzfeld</b>	1924	Invited by the Iranian government.	He had to prepare a detailed plan of Persepolis as well as an estimate of what it would cost to clear the site. The famed reliefs on the eastern side of the Apadana were uncovered (Meyers, 1997:275).
	1931-1934	Chosen by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago to head an expedition to Persepolis.	
<b>Eric F. Schmidt</b>	1935-1939	Succeeded Herzfeld as director of works at Persepolis.	He published three volumes on his work at Persepolis. This was really remarkable because he encountered many problems (Kuhrt, 1991:204).

### 3.8 CONCLUSION

The magnificent city, Persepolis, that was conceived by Darius I and completed by his son Xerxes and grandson Artaxerxes I,<sup>46</sup> realised the idea of Darius to demonstrate the grandeur of Achaemenid rule through architecture and imagery (Wiesehöfer, 2009:73). Different names were given to the complex during different stages and by different people. However, the name Persepolis was generally accepted by people outside Iran, but the Iranian name *Takht-e Jamshid* is still used in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is difficult to determine an exact date for the commencement and completion of the building project. The Achaemenids left very few written records of their history but when the royal inscriptions were deciphered and the findings of archaeologists analysed, scholars started to speculate on the dates for the commencement of work at Persepolis.

The vastness of the empire enabled Darius to successfully mobilise manpower with different skills who contributed to the establishment of Persepolis. Stone was the most common material used. It was quarried in different places for different purposes. A variety of other materials were mainly used for decoration.

The buildings on the site consisted mainly of hypostyle halls of different sizes and for different purposes. In some cases, such as the side walls of the access staircase to the Apadana, areas

<sup>46</sup> All construction and stone masonry were stopped, some still unfinished, at end of the reign of Artaxerxes I (Wiesehöfer, 2001:23).

were richly decorated with reliefs. Special stone and highly skilled craftsmen were responsible for illustrating snippets of Achaemenid history in these reliefs.

Scholars, after many years, have still not reached a consensus on the function of Persepolis. Chart 3.2 indicates that one can regard Persepolis as a multifunctional city with ceremonial, administrative, and a show of power and prestige as the main functions.

After the destruction of Persepolis, the city was disbanded and pilfered by different people. For many centuries Persepolis was just a forgotten city. The rediscovery of Persepolis by visitors with special interests from different countries rekindled an interest in the site, which is now a treasured World Heritage Site.

The story of Persepolis remains incomplete, but its remnants are the most valuable heritage of Persian architecture for the nations of the world.

## CHAPTER FOUR

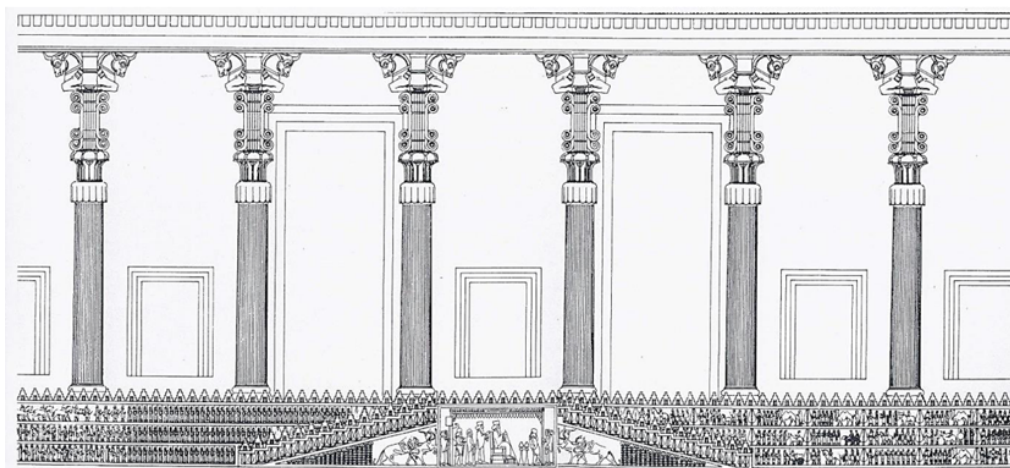
### ACHAEMENID ARCHITECTURE AND ART AND THE APADANA RELIEFS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to view the art of the *Apadana Reliefs* in their original context with regard to the history, geography, political organisation, and culture of the subject peoples at the time of its creation. This also necessitates a brief look at the architecture and where the works of art appear on the building. Repetitive designs and motifs will also be discussed, as well as those reliefs that have a bearing on the *Apadana Reliefs*. Additionally, the symbolism reflected in the motifs in the art will be touched upon.

Apart from the *Apadana Reliefs*, sculptures in the round also appeared as protomes at the summit of the columns inside the building. Another sculpture in the round, that of Darius I, is included because of the information engraved on it.

After entering through the ‘Gate of All Lands’, the visitor is confronted by the **northern façade** of the Apadana. The immediate impact of the reliefs on the visitor is an overwhelming visual experience of unity. In actual fact, this is an optical illusion because the reliefs are divided into three different parts - (A), (B), and (C) (cf. Fig. 4.1).



A = East

C = Central panel

B = West

**Fig. 4.1 Apadana: Reconstruction of the Northern Stair Façade with the original Central Panel (Root, 1979: n.p.)**

In Fig. 4.1, the human eye fits the central front Panel (C) into the rear plane of Wings (A) and (B), thus seeing it as a whole (Root, 1979:232).

The same scheme was shown, in mirror image, on the eastern façade (Barnett, 1957:60; Culican, 1965:95; Root, 1979:88). This meant that the images were seen once from the right and once from the left (Herzfeld, 1941:228). In the whole history of art, such a reduplication of a subject of that size is unparalleled. The same optical illusion, described above, is experienced on approach to the eastern façade. On viewing this façade as a whole, the architectural urge for symmetry, innate to Iranian aesthetic feeling,<sup>47</sup> is visible (Herzfeld, 1941:270). The reliefs on the northern side of the Apadana were exposed to natural decay and artificial damage like pilfering the works of art or defaming the human figures. Fortunately, the reliefs on the eastern side survived for two and a half thousand years because they were covered with debris, and thus hidden from human eyes, until discovered by the archaeologist, Herzfeld, in 1938. The reliefs on the **eastern façade** will be analysed and discussed in this study.

The current chapter will give a brief overview of the Achaemenid architecture and art relevant to this study. Different motifs in the reliefs will also be discussed.

## 4.2 ARCHITECTURE AND ART

It is well recognised that during the Persian Period, and more specifically during the Achaemenid Period, the art and architecture was eclectic. Influences, inspiration, and ideas from a large number of sources were used (Curtis, 1997:12). According to Callieri (2020:332), the ideological aspects of the art and architecture of Persepolis focused on two things. On the one hand, the ‘king’s role as guardian of cosmic order’ and, on the other, the pride of the people who had conquered and established the largest empire in antiquity and were now exercising ‘universal rule’.

### 4.2.1 Architecture

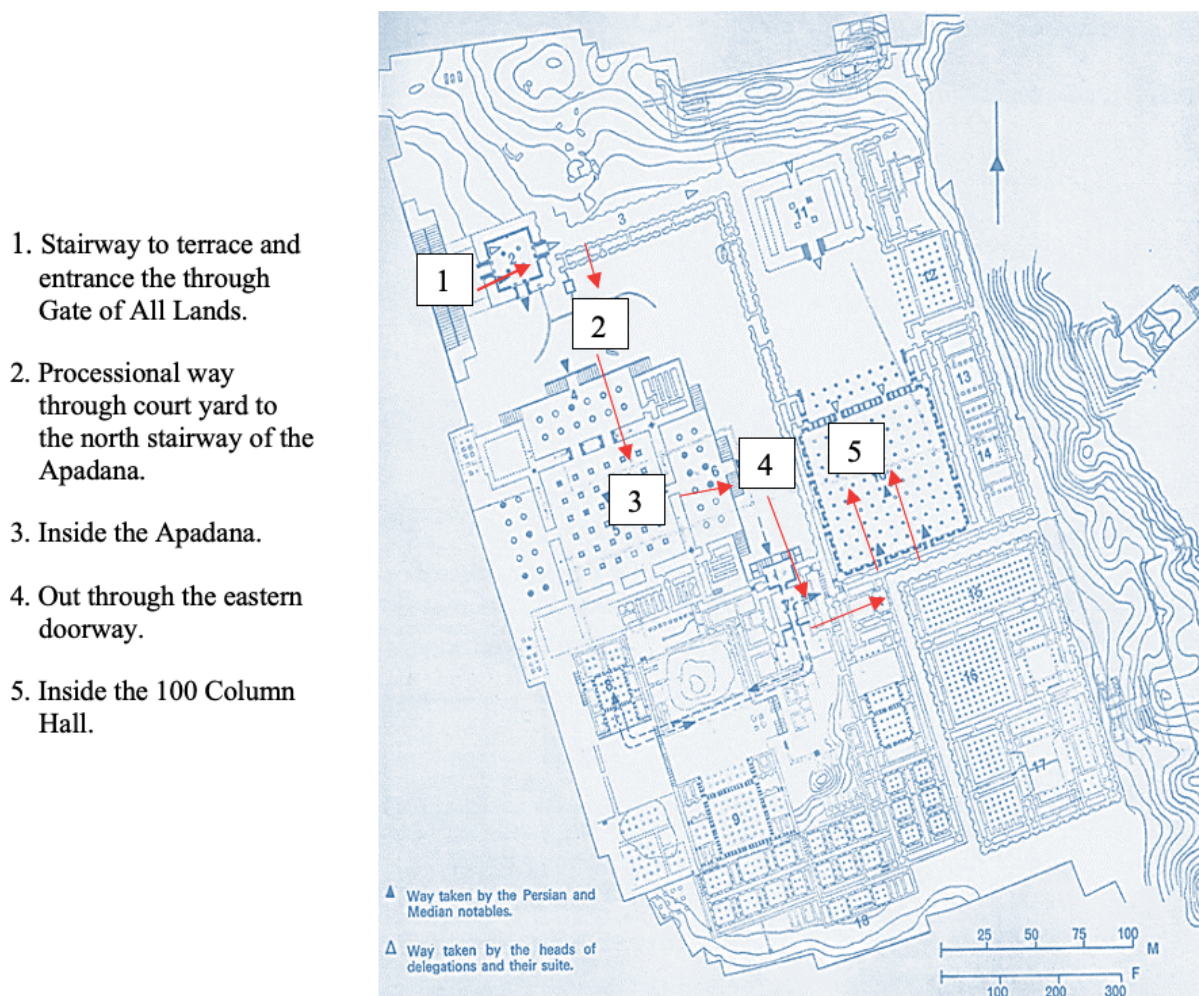
Darius I had a vision for a ceremonial city and a suitable site was subsequently chosen at the foot of Kuh-i Ramat. The king was in the privileged position where he could draw on the expertise of master designers (Olmstead, 1959:277) and the best-skilled craftsmen in his empire to use the variety of their talents in this joint enterprise (Ghirshman, 1961:190). Royal architects were employed to assist him in realising this conception (cf. Chapter 3). These

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<sup>47</sup> Even in present-day Iran every carpet or design of an *objet d’art* is produced in pairs.



architects played a vital role in the design and planning of the building project. This planning clearly took place at the highest level of skill (Colburn, 2014:779) with a completely drafted plan with measurements that were to be strictly adhered to (Herzfeld, 1941:224). The result of Darius' planning for the Apadana can be seen in Fig. 4.2.



**Fig. 4.2 General plan of the buildings on the terrace at Persepolis and the route followed by the visitors (From Ghirshman, 1964:206)**

According to Herzfeld (1941:221), the Achaemenid architecture was characterised by the following:

- (i) The fashioning of natural rock.
- (ii) Masonry of colossal blocks of stone.
- (iii) Wooden or stone columns supporting wooden ceilings.<sup>48</sup>
- (iv) Ample use of metal.

<sup>48</sup> Wood presupposes forests in the mountainous regions (Herzfeld, 1941:221) This was a long way from Persepolis. Wood was also imported from Lebanon (Curtis and Razmjou, 2005:50) which was also far away from the building site.

(v) Walls of sundried bricks (cf. Fig. 6.7.5).

All this eventually contributed to imperial and monumental architecture (Roaf, 2010:247).<sup>49</sup>

During the period of the development of their own architecture, there was cultural interaction available within the Achaemenid Empire and they could borrow from some of their subject peoples such as the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. Despite this borrowing, some of the most ‘profound and essential aspects of Achaemenian art remain totally original’ (Dandamaev et al., 1994:261; Frankfort, 1954:218).

The style of Assyrian palaces had a ‘public’ front and a private ‘rear’ part. The citadel of Persepolis was conceived in the same style (Amiet et al., 1981:18). It is not entirely clear how these architectural influences were transmitted (Curtis, 2005:13). For example, Assyrian palaces were already destroyed in 612 BCE (Curtis, 2005:13). Questions about the nature of Achaemenid architecture include:

- How much of the Assyrian and Babylonian architecture and art was known to the Achaemenids? (Calmeyer, 1994:133).
- How did the Assyrian ruins influence Achaemenid architecture?
- Did the remnants of the splendid decorative scheme of Assyrian palaces serve as an example for Achaemenid architects and artists?

According to Roaf (2010:247), there is a possibility that Median architecture also had an influence on Achaemenid architecture and that some fundamental aspects of their architecture were borrowed from the Medes. Persepolis became more and more cosmopolitan, thus absorbing foreign elements, either of composition and/or of decoration but not to such an extent that it affected the essence of Achaemenid architecture (Herzfeld, 1941:247).

#### *4.2.1.1 Architectural elements*

The lavish use of columns<sup>50</sup> with unique capitals and the predominance of square rooms are some of the most characteristic features of Achaemenid architecture (cf. Fig 4.2). Although foreign craftsmen from different parts of the empire helped to build and decorate the

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Chapter Three.

<sup>50</sup> Columned halls have been found on many pre-Achaemenid sites in western Iran and Urartu, but these only had two rows of columns. This could have been an inspiration for columned halls with multiple rows of columns (Roaf, 2010:252).



Achaemenid palaces, the result was essentially Persian in character with buildings scattered over terraces and platforms.

Certain elements and motifs in the architecture of the buildings were repeated in different places in Persepolis (cf. 4.3.1.4 & 4.3.1.6).

Achaemenid buildings, including those at Persepolis, can be regarded as the culminating and also final phase of architecture of the ancient Near East (Wachsmuth, 1964-5:312).

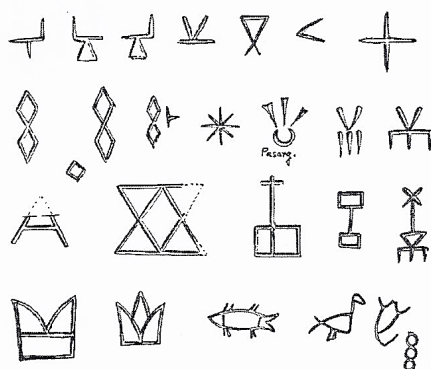
#### 4.2.1.2 Preparation for the building process

Once the plan was in place, the preparations for the actual building of this city began with the preparation of the building material.

A certain craftsmanship was required for different aspects of the building process. These ‘humble’ aspects include *stone* (cf. 3.4.2), *stone cutters*, *stonemasons*, and *mud-brick makers*.

##### (a) Stonecutters

The technique of fashioning rocks was developed by miners and cave dwellers in Asia Minor [Anatolia] (Herzfeld, 1941:221.) Their expertise was used during the building project of Darius I (Farkas, 1974:37; cf. Fig. 4.3). The selected stone, in a specific quarry, was penetrated with different tools: ‘iron picks, sledgehammers and large punches’ (Shahbazi, 2011:223). Once separated from the rock, the detached stone was rolled down the hill from where it was moved by road or via the river to the building site at Persepolis (Shahbazi, 2011:223-224).



**Fig. 4.3 Mason's marks from Persepolis (Herzfeld 1941:237)**

##### (b) Stonemasons

Before anything could be built, the stonemasons had to shape the rough pieces of rock or stone into smaller units and shapes in order to fit them together to form strong walls like the retaining walls of the Apadana (cf. Fig. 3.4). Different kinds of tools were used by the stonemasons e.g., claw chisels, clamps, and cramps (Boardman, 2000:51).

Other masons, using other tools like special double-pointed hammers called *keners*, worked alongside them to shape the blocks (Farkas, 1974:37; Shahbazi, 2011:228). The surfaces were then smoothed by pointed and toothed chisels and ‘signed’ by the stonemasons (cf. Fig.4.3). The mason’s marks are not hieroglyphs they are signatures of the masons. The term ‘mason-artist,’ which immediately ties the artist to the material he was using, was also in use.

The motif that was to be carved on the stone was marked out with a flat chisel and the design was then given form with a toothed chisel (Nylander, 1965:50-54).

#### (c) Mudbrick makers

It was much quicker to fabricate mudbricks when compared to the quarrying of stone blocks. Mudbricks were not only more economical, but the material was also readily available. Mud, river or desert sediments, and water as well as straw, which was used as binding material, were used to make this type of building material (Emery, 2011: n.p.).

#### (d) Wood

In the Apadana, the columns were made of stone. The capital at the far end supported heavy wooden beams.<sup>51</sup> Columns were sometimes also made of wood (Herzfeld, 1941:221; Curtis & Razmjou, 2005:50; cf. Fig.3.16).

#### (e) Colour

Colour also played a role in Achaemenid architecture [cf. 4.2.2.1(e)]. According to Afami & Gambke (2012:335), the interaction between architecture and light has always played a significant role in forming the shape of structures. This can also be applied to the painted reliefs of Persepolis where colour was present (cf. Fig. 4.5).

Some buildings, like the Apadana, were built on a raised terrace. In this case, the terrace was 2.5 m high. There could be several reasons for a raised terrace: for defence or to lift the people above the heat and dust of the plains or maybe because it was fashionable to do so (Herzfeld, 1941:224).

The Apadana had to be accessed by a double reversed staircase<sup>52</sup> (cf. Figs. 3.5.1 & 3.5.2). In the case of the palace of Darius, access was along a single staircase. Other buildings, like the

<sup>51</sup> Wood presupposes forests in the mountainous regions (Herzfeld, 1941:221). Wood was also imported from Lebanon (Curtis & Razmjou, 2005:50) which was also far away from Persepolis.

<sup>52</sup> Perhaps the most perfect flight of stairs ever built (Herzfeld, 1941:225).

100 Column Hall (Throne Hall), did not need an access staircase because they were not built on a raised terrace. No traces of residential areas on the platform have been discovered (Razmjou, 2005:244).

#### 4.2.2 Art

The art of Cyrus and the Achaemenids is linked to an emerging Indo-Iranian consciousness and a long evolutionary process (Garrison, 2013:567). A purely Iranian element from the Persians themselves contributed to the successful evolution of an authentic imperial art. The art during the reign of Darius I was the culmination of this process. It stands out more sharply than that of his predecessors and was a break from ancient cultures (Farkas, 1974:29). This does not mean that there were no traces of the art of the ancient Near East in Persepolis. ‘Royal art was the seasoned art of the ancient Near East under new supervision’ (Shahbazi, 2011:7). According to Herzfeld (1941:274), Achaemenid art was also the very last phase of art in the ancient Near East.

On completion of the building of the Apadana, there were approximately 90 m of wall surface that had to be decorated on each of the northern and eastern façades. Darius I and his advisors now had the opportunity to recruit craftsmen (artists), with specific skills from the vast empire (Curtis, 1997:12), to create something distinctly Achaemenian (Colburn, 2014:775). The end result was an unsurpassed decoration of many figures, in relief, especially on the northern and eastern façades of the Apadana.

The term ‘Achaemenid sculpture’ refers to the monumental art tied to the royal court. The sculptures planned and made during the reign of Darius I and completed by his son, Xerxes, were almost ruthlessly personal because of their preoccupation with the figure of the king. Colburn (2014:774) defined two categories of Achaemenid art, namely:

- (i) Art *of* the empire, ‘that is, art produced in furtherance of imperial goals’ (Colburn, 2014:774) e.g., the *Apadana Reliefs* aimed at affirming the universality of the king’s power (Amiet et al., 1981:18).
- (ii) Art *in* the empire that included artistic production of the subject peoples of the Achaemenid Empire. These two categories constitute the corpus of Achaemenid art (Colburn, 2014:778).

Different scholars describe the art of the Achaemenids in different ways e.g., it was a monarchical art (Ghirshman, 1964:130); an expression of the relationship of the king and his empire (Calmeyer, 1980:57); and the monumental court art intended to symbolise the grandeur

of royal power as well as the might of the empire (Dandaemaev et al., 1994:261). ‘It represented a timeless and idealized *pax achaemenidica*’ (Henkelman, 2012:947) and ‘it was an art to exalt the power of the king’ (Boucherlat, 2013:575).

There was a ‘lack of explicit textual testimony’ (Gunter, 1990:11) but a symbolic language was created and served as a means of communication through the numerous reliefs on the façades of the Apadana (Nunn, 2019:67). Not only did the sculptures decorate the architecture at Persepolis, but they also explained it (Farkas, 1974:58). It cannot be seen as a real narrative because the main aim was to illustrate the power of the king and the diversity of the people in the empire (Ghirshman, 1961:168).

The creation of a complete and entirely official and royal art took over two hundred years to attain its final character (Herzfeld, 1941:274) which gave a dignity and brilliance to the monarchy (Huart, 1972:100). The all-powerful king ruled over a vast kingdom that represented an arrangement of the varied groups of subject peoples (Ghirshman, 1961:190).

The monumental architecture of Persepolis was in itself a work of art. Add to that all the reliefs found on the Apadana stairways, the staircase to the palace of Darius, door jambs – not only of palaces, but also on the door jambs of the 100 Column Hall. Herzfeld (1941:247) saw all these breath-taking works of art as subordinate to the architecture. However, one must keep in mind that it was the architecture which provided the necessary space for the reliefs. The Apadana supplied a large surface area that could be adorned with ninety-metre-long reliefs in three registers on the northern and eastern façades of the building. Some scholars see the art as subordinate to the architecture (Herzfeld, 1941:247; Olmstead 1959:67). In my view one must rather see it as complimentary.

#### *4.2.2.1 Different aspects of Persian (Achaemenid) art*

##### *(a) Aim and objective*

The creation of an essentially ‘new’ art that was intended to be an international ‘language’ that would convey the greatness of the king, as the lawful heir to the conquered kings of the ancient Near East, to the world through art and architectural terms (Barnett, 1957:77). The larger-than-life portrayal of the image of the king contributed to his glorification (Barnett, 1957:58; Farkas, 1974:55). The art also aimed to illustrate the diversity of the people that formed the empire (Ghirshman, 1961:168).

### (b) Influences

How familiar were the Achaemenids with the art of their subject people? According to (Calmeyer, 1994:131), they were familiar with Elamite, Median, Assyrian, and Babylonian art. Even the Egyptian motif of the lotus flower appeared in Achaemenid art (Lloyd, 1971:246).

If one views the remainder of Assyrian art in the palace of Sargon II in Khorsabad e.g., the lamassu (cf. Fig. 3.8), there is a definite Assyrian influence on the Achaemenid art (Albenda,<sup>53</sup> 1986). It is possible that sections of the Assyrian palaces adorned with their art were still standing and visible in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Garrison, 2013:573). The possibility is also there that the royal imagery was available to Darius I. Table 5.6 will elucidate some of the influences of the ancient Near East on Achaemenid art.

In a cosmopolitan society, like the subject peoples during the Achaemenid Period, it goes without saying that different influences would have been absorbed into different aspects of society – art being one of those aspects.

There was a rapid development in Greek sculpture when there was a transition from the Archaic to the Classical Period between 520 and 460 BCE. This development overlapped with part of the building period at Persepolis. The ‘genius of Greek artists’ (Lloyd, 1971:241) might have had an influence on the art of the Achaemenids although not all scholars agree to the existence of this Greek influence. According to Frankfort (1954:25), it *did not have any influence* on Achaemenid art. Ghirshman (1964:347) and Olmstead (1959:67) hold a similar view that Achaemenian art was ‘unaffected by the dazzling successes of contemporary Greek art’.

Folds in garments appeared in Greek sculptures at more or less the same time that Persepolis was built. Similar folds are apparent in many of the figures in the reliefs found in Persepolis. The contours of the body parts were also visible in the material. This occurrence was also present in Greek sculpture (Boardman, 2000:119). The art at Persepolis was therefore not devoid of Greek influence. However, one has to be careful not to overemphasize the role that Greek art played in the execution of art in Persepolis e.g., the influence of the Ionians.<sup>54</sup> Greek inscriptions, of East Greek origin, have been found in the quarries at Kuh-e Ramat and serve as evidence of the presence of Greeks at Persepolis (Mousavi, 2012:51). Thus, there must have been some Greek influence on the art at Persepolis and cannot be ruled out completely.

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<sup>53</sup> For example, see drawings by Flandin (Albenda, 1986: Plates 24, 25, 28, 30, 48, 70) and extant reliefs in different museums around the world as well as plaster copies of some of the works of art.

<sup>54</sup> The Ionian section of the Asiatic Greeks (Eastern Anatolia) was formed by the emigrants from Attica and Euboea (Robinson, 1970) therefore the Greek influence cannot be ruled out completely.

### (c) Characteristics

Repetition and symmetry form important characteristics of Achaemenid art.

Repetition was the essence of Achaemenid art (Frankfort, 1954:231). It occurs in the interweaving of separate parts e.g., groups of tribute-bearers preceded by ushers in Wing B; the lion-and-bull depiction in the triangular spaces; cypress trees as partitions and rosette borders; ‘Immortals’ and nobles on Wing A on the eastern façade of the Apadana.

In Fig. 4.1, the symmetry is visible in the entire depiction: in Wings A and B people are moving towards the seated king - some from the right and some from the left; the lion-and-bull combat in the triangles and slanting staircases on both sides.

### (d) Style and decoration

The style and decoration that was achieved during the reign of Darius I, and his son Xerxes, was marked by ‘clarity, balance, firmness and power’ (Ghirshman, 1964:168; Farkas, 1974:54).<sup>55</sup> The artists created a new style that was quite different to the style of Cyrus’ art (Farkas, 1974:29). In a superficial comparison between the art styles of Cyrus II and Darius I, one realises that at Pasagardae, for example, there was no enthroned king, nor any processions, while in Persepolis they appear regularly – be it on staircases or door jambs. The Achaemenids had an inexhaustible talent for devising different forms – original, striking, and felicitous (Lloyd, 1971:242). Despite this, they had a restricted repertory with the result that some scholars find them monotonous and without feeling (Frankfort, 1969:231). However, to me, there is serenity and a stateliness in the works of art with their exquisite detail executed with clarity and precision.

Elaborate reliefs, as a form of decoration, covered large surfaces of Achaemenid buildings (Frankfort, 1969:232). In places, the crown of the royal figure in the reliefs was richly decorated with jewellery - usually made of precious metal. The reliefs refined and enriched the architecture and dominated the architectural setting. ‘The style which characterises all Achaemenid art of the mature phase comes to the fore - a style at once elegant and powerful, decorative and colourful and also imposing. This resulted in an imperial style’ (Farkas, 1974:46, 58 & 59).

At Persepolis, we also find a wealth of artistic themes and motifs that were used as design elements in the decorations e.g., rosettes and palmettes (Garrison, 2013:588; cf. Fig.4.4).

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<sup>55</sup> These two authors use exactly the same words, except for the sequence of the word ‘power’.



Palmettes and rosettes were also present in Assyrian art (Boardman, 2000:81; Seidl & Krebernik, 2007; Seidl, 2005).



**Fig. 4.4. Stepped crenulations with a niche, rosette border, and palmettes**

**(e) Colour as decoration**

The application of colour to the sculptures also played an important part and enhanced the visual experience of visitors to Persepolis. In the 1930s, Herzfeld could see bright colours on the newly discovered reliefs at Persepolis (Herzfeld, 1941:255). In 1932, Herzfeld sent a letter to the Oriental Institute in Chicago in which the following sentence gives an idea of colour at Persepolis: ‘The most striking colour is a luminous bright red for the ground of the king’s garment and for the shoes’ (Nagel, 2013:605).

Today, there is almost a complete destruction of the colours and only small traces of paint survived – usually better in less accessible areas like the recesses of drapery folds (Nunn, et al., 2015:191).



**Fig. 4.5 Drawing of an Ahuramazda fragment with traces of the remaining colour (Lerner, 1973:120-121)**

On some of the door jambs, traces of paint can be seen where an image, representing the god, appeared in the winged disc in association with the baldachin (cf. Fig. 4.5; Table 4.1).<sup>56</sup>

**Table 4.1 Traces of colour and their occurrence on the Ahuramazda fragment**

Colour	Occurrence
<b>Red</b>	On the god's robe.
<b>Green</b>	On the first and the last rows of the large feathers.
<b>Blue</b>	Inside the disc, on the robe, and in the wing area to the left of the disc.
<b>Purple</b>	On the lotus flower.

At first, artists were restricted to a few colours by using iron oxide (ochre –yellow to brown); hematite (red); carbon and bitumen (black); and calcite (white). It is still not quite clear how the stone was prepared for the painting of the sculptures or how the paint was applied. Was an undercoat used? There are arguments against the use of an undercoat (Nunn et al., 2015:196). Some fragments have marks on them (Lerner, 1973:122). Was this perhaps a way to prepare the stone for the adherence of the paint to the stone surface?

One must also keep in mind that Persian reliefs had brightly coloured Assyrian prototypes (Lloyd, 1971:246). Portions of the reliefs, that might have included the Ahuramazda fragment (cf. Fig. 4.5), could have been purposely stippled 'with a toothed chisel to prepare them for paint' (Lerner, 1973:122). Unfortunately, very little of the original colour survived on the Ahuramazda fragment.

How then do scholars study colour when only a very small sample is available? In the modern era, excellent and adequate technical equipment, which is necessary to detect and analyse the pigments, became available. Researchers can now use spectroscopy and laser beams,<sup>57</sup> an electron scanning microscope, and colourimeters to assist them in the identification of minute specks of pigment. Only small pigment samples are needed for the analysis when using these facilities.

With all this at their disposal, the researchers can now study all aspects of colour. This has resulted in the emergence of a systematic integration of the study of colour into related

<sup>56</sup> From the information in Lerner (1973:120-121).

<sup>57</sup> This method measures characteristic motion patterns of the molecules of a sample when excited by monochromatic light (laser) and UV/VIS spectroscopy (Nunn et al., 2015:192).

disciplines (Nagel, 2013:596). The term ‘polychromy’<sup>58</sup> is now used when dealing with a multi-coloured entity (Nagel, 2013:597). One can only speculate that the craftsmen sometimes used other materials (non-paint) such as gold, silver, and lapis lazuli as well. These materials are no longer visible on the *Apadana Reliefs* in Persepolis.

Traces of colour were not only found on images but also on cuneiform writing. On close examination, Delshad and Mojtoba (2019:5) discovered, in 2001, that there are still a few remaining traces of blue pigment in the cuneiform signs on the inscription DNf.

Images and colours, in ancient civilisations, were regarded as concepts. Therefore, art was not just there for the sake of art (Nunn et al., 2015:201). Colour also played a symbolic role in ancient images e.g., red stood for life and dynamic force and predicted wealth; black announced an eclipse; white famine, while green symbolised defeat.

#### 4.2.2.2 Types of images

Artwork features were found in different places and in different forms: immense gate guardian figures (cf. Fig. 3.9); sculptures in the round (cf. Fig. 4.6.1); reliefs in stone, applied to the exterior façades of buildings and jambs of doorways; rock reliefs at Bisitun; and the tombs of kings such as the tomb of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam (Farkas, 1974:5). There were different types of reliefs<sup>59</sup> (high, mid, and low or bas-reliefs) in the art of the ancient Near East. The *Apadana Reliefs* all belonged to the last group of reliefs. Whenever the word ‘relief’ is used during this study, it refers to low or bas-reliefs. The main focus will be on the reliefs of the eastern façade of the Apadana. Cylinder and stamp seals, although very small, also represented a form of Achaemenid art. Different motifs were found on objects other than stone as well e.g., on coins and on the shield of a soldier (cf. Fig. 4.19).

#### 4.2.3 Artists

It was a daunting task to decorate the Apadana with prescribed stone reliefs. Skilled artists and craftsmen were initially needed to execute the plans of Darius I and his advisors. This role was later fulfilled by Xerxes and his consultees.

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<sup>58</sup> Texier (1840) is regarded as the father of modern polychromy. He provided a full set of observations on polychromy (Nagel, 2013:601).

#### 4.2.3.1 Terminology

Within the team, different people were responsible for different aspects of the work. Stone cutters, stonemasons, and mud-brick makers were already discussed (cf. 4.2.1.2). A problem arises when terms like artist, artisan, and craftsman are used interchangeably and creates confusion.

They are all defined as skilled people. In ancient Near Eastern sources ‘craftsman’ and ‘artisan’ represent ‘any practitioner of a specialized skill’ (Gunter, 1990:11). They can almost be used as synonyms. The image-making by an artisan was a craft learned in a palace or temple workshop. His achievement consisted primarily in the proper handling of material through special techniques (Gunter, 1990:12). An artist, on the other hand, can be regarded as a specialist artistic creator who understood things beyond craft. The term ‘mason-artist’ can also be used for describing those craftsmen working with stone and preparing it for the artists.

#### 4.2.3.2 Origin of the artists

In different parts of the empire and the homeland, there were also workshops where artists were trained in sketching<sup>60</sup> and the carving of reliefs. These artists could then adopt, copy, and execute reliefs with great competence (Boardman, 2000:117).

The trainees, as well as qualified artists, could also belong to craft associations.<sup>61</sup> This resulted in a relatively stable system and provided a source where skilled artists and artisans could be recruited for specific assignments in the Apadana relief project (Root, 1979:23). There was also a less stable environment where artisans were on the move and could be employed on a temporary basis (Root, 1994:23). Therefore, a whole range of skilled people, in different parts of the empire, could be summoned to work on the reliefs. This is confirmed in a Babylonian inscription (DPg) found on the south terrace wall at Persepolis.

#### 4.2.3.3 Transmission of artistic mechanisms

Drawing provided an important means of image transmission in the systems of learning and art production (Root, 1979:26). An artist’s sketch pad, dating from the Achaemenid Period, was recovered in Persepolis during excavations (Tilia, 1978). From the sketches, these images were transferred to the stone where they were going to be transfigured into specific reliefs and eventually painted. There was little, if any, individual creativity. This can be illustrated in a

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<sup>14</sup> Sketchbooks, as sources for circulating the standardizing patterns of figures and/or ornaments, were probably in existence (Gunter, 1990:13)









<sup>61</sup> These craft associations were the forerunners of the craft guilds in medieval Europe (Root, 1994:24).

detailed iconographic analysis of four imperial guards on the northern façade of the Apadana (cf. Fig. 4.6).



**Fig. 4.6 Fragment of four imperial guards on the Northern façade of the Apadana (British Museum, 118838)**

**Table 4.2 Comparison of the elbows and wrists in Fig. 4.6**

	Guard 1	Guard 2	Guard 3	Guard 4
<b>Elbows</b>	 <p>Three strokes on the inner part of the elbow to indicate a fold.</p>	 <p>One stroke on the inner part of the elbow to indicate a fold.</p>	 <p>Three strokes on the inner part of the elbow to indicate a fold.</p>	 <p>One stroke hardly visible on the inner part of the elbow.</p>
<b>Wrists</b>	 <p>Wrist bands differ on the left and right arm.</p>	 <p>Wrist bands differ on the left and right arm.</p>	 <p>Similar wristbands on both arms.</p>	 <p>Wrist band on the left arm similar to those on the left arms of guards.</p>

In Fig. 4.6, there are similarities in the carving of the heads – even down to the detail of the earrings. The garments are also similar. In a more detailed iconographic analysis of the elbows



and decorations on the wrists in Table 4.2, it becomes clear that there are similarities and differences with regard to the ‘folds’ of the garments on the inner part of the elbows as well as in the rendering of the wrist bands.

After this detailed analysis, it is clear that hardly any individuality or personal creativity was displayed. It is also not clear how many artists were involved in the creation of these reliefs (cf. 4.2.4.3).

#### **4.2.4 Sculptures in the round**

These sculptures did not figure strongly in the art of the empire. However, examples did exist, and a few will be illustrated and discussed below.

##### *4.2.4.1 Statue of Darius*

The larger-than-life, and partially preserved, statue of Darius was made in Egypt on Darius’ command and crafted in Egyptian style (Briant, 2002:174; Colburn, 2014:784; Waters, 2014:79; cf. Fig. 4.6.1). The petrological examination of the stone, as well as the inscriptions, confirm that the statue was carved from Egyptian stone (Roaf, 1974:73; Boardman, 2000:16). Why was the statue of Darius carved in Egypt and rendered in a particular way? On the pleats of the statue of Darius at Susa the following inscription provides the answer:

Behold the stone statue that Darius ordered made in Egypt that whoever sees it in future may know that the Persian hold Egypt (DSab) [Briant, 2002:178].

This colossal, desecrated statue was excavated beside a gateway at Susa. How, when, and why it was brought to Susa from Egypt is not known. To transport such a heavy, solid stone object from Egypt to Susa must have been quite a feat. It is one of the finest extant examples of a sculpture in the round to have survived Achaemenid times (Curtis & Razmjou, 2005:99).

The statue sat on a rectangular base with Egyptian style decorations cut in sunk low reliefs (Roaf, 1974:73).<sup>62</sup> On the front and back is a representation of an Egyptian god and the tying of the Egyptian knot (cf. Fig. 4.6.2).<sup>63</sup>

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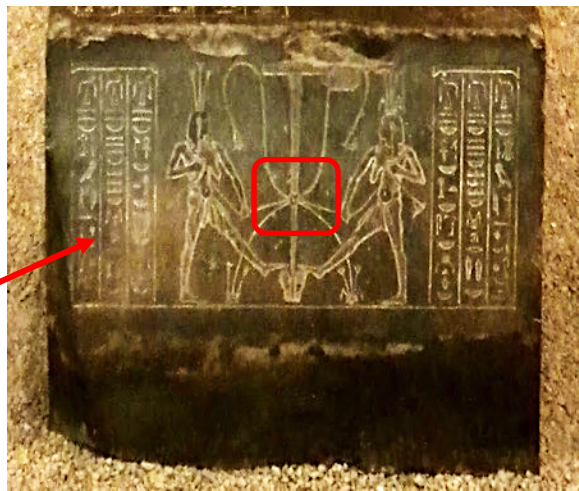
<sup>62</sup> In Egypt, this was a common technique used for relief sculpture as well as for hieroglyphic inscriptions (Roaf, 1974:73).

<sup>63</sup> The knot was a centuries-old symbol of Egyptian unification. This symbolised the regional duality of Upper (southern) and Lower (northern) Egypt (Roaf, 1974:74).





**Fig. 4.6.1 Statue of Darius in the National Museum, Teheran (4112). Height: 2.66m; base 104x64 cm and 51 cm high (Curtis & Razmjou, 2005:99)**



**Fig. 4.6.2 Detail of tying of the Egyptian knot (Roaf, 1974:74)**

On the long sides of the base, subject peoples are shown in Egyptian style in the form of twenty-four 'fortress - cartouches' (Boardman, 2000:115; Curtis & Tallis, 2005:99; Figs. 4.7.1-4.7.3). The names are written in hieroglyphs (Gropp, 2009:290). The subject peoples on the base are the reworking of a traditional Egyptian scheme (Root, 1979:146; Fig. 4.8). The human figures at the top of the 'fortress - cartouches' with their hands raised in a palms-up gesture are represented as supporting the king or representing his subject people (Root, 1979:146).

Hands are held in the air as if perhaps symbolically supporting a throne like the throne bearers of Darius I on his tomb at Nasqh-I Rustam.



Fig. 4.7.1 People of the empire on the long sides of the statue base (A and B) with the names of the group they represent in 'fortress-cartouches'. Some face east and some west (Gropp, 2009:290).

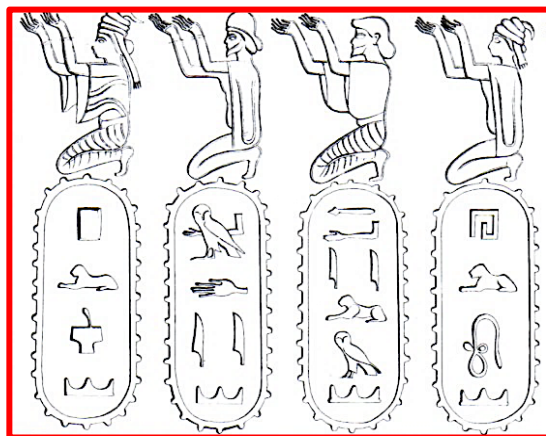
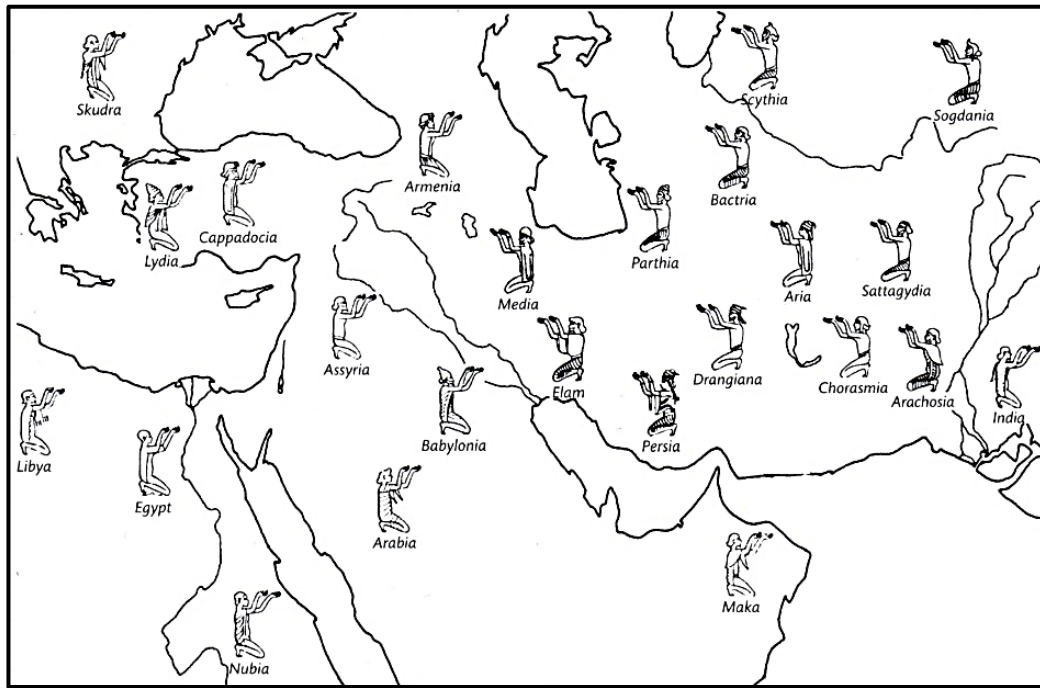


Fig. 4.7.2 Detailed drawing of a few 'fortress-cartouches'. From left to right: Persia, Media, Elam, and Aria (Perrot, 2013:275).



Fig. 4.7.3 The fortress-cartouches as cut in sunk low reliefs (Perrot, 2013:275).



**Fig. 4.8 Distribution of the peoples on the base of the Darius statue. Some facing west and some facing east (Perrot, 2013:273)**

In Fig 4.9, Darius is shown wearing a Persian robe and a dagger (*akinakes*) is held in place by an engraved belt (cf. Figs. 5.8.1 & 5.8.2).



**Fig. 4.9 Detail of part of Darius' robe with inscriptions (from Fig. 4.6.1)**



There are inscriptions on some of the folds of the robe. On the right-hand side is a trilingual cuneiform inscription invoking Ahuramazda and celebrating Darius' Egyptian victory. On the left fold is an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphics (Waters, 2014:80). According to Frankfort (1969:232), sculptures in the round possessed an ornamental character. This was also true of the statue of Darius but the wealth of inscriptions on the base and on the figure itself, tell their own story – the glorification of the king who reigned over all his subject people.

#### 4.2.4.2 Protomes

Protomes at the summit of the columns only illustrate part of the body of the animal or human being that is not attached to the background. They can also be regarded as sculptures in the round. Four different examples occurred in Persepolis, namely bull protomes (cf. Figs. 4.10.1 & 4.10.2), lions (cf. Fig. 4.11), human-headed protomes (cf. Figs. 4.12.1-4.12.3), and gryphons (griffins) (cf. Figs. 4.13.1-4.13.2).

##### (a) Bull protomes<sup>64</sup>



**Fig. 4.10.1 Half of a recreated bull protome (Rezaeian, 2004:31)**



**Fig. 4.10.2 Remains of the head of a bull protome at Persepolis (Photo L. Jonker)**

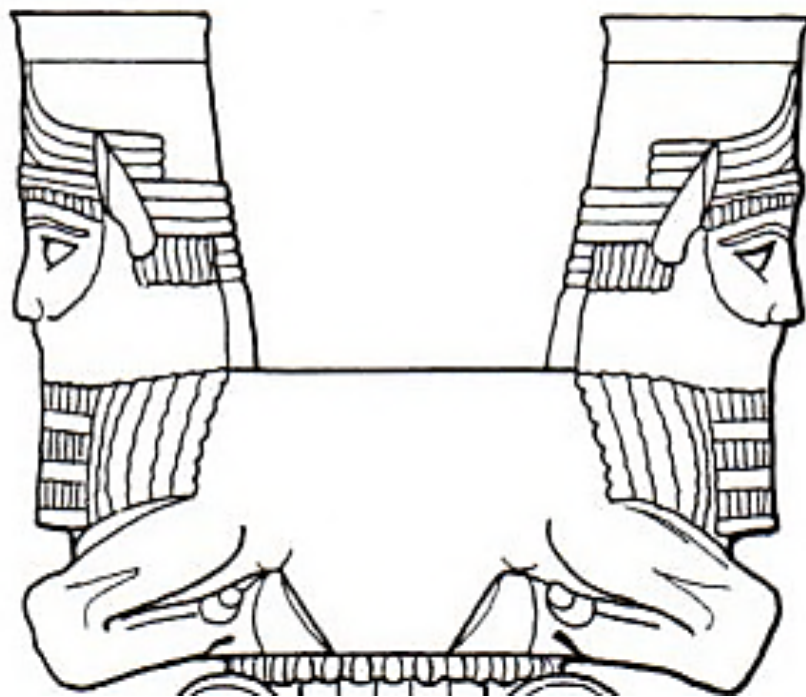
<sup>64</sup> Bulls were the ancient symbol of stability to the Sumerians and Elamites (Amiet et al., 1981:18).

(b) Lion



**Fig. 4.11 Part of a lion protome from the east portico. Only found here at Persepolis (Koch, 2001:40).**

(c) Human-headed protome



**Fig. 4.12.1 Part of a drawing of a reconstructed human-headed protome (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:51)**



**Fig. 4.12.2 Side view of the human head with the bent legs of an animal (Museum of Ancient Iran, part of the National Museum of Iran A24066)**



**Fig. 4.12.3 Frontal view of human head of a protome (Museum of Ancient Iran, part of the National Museum of Iran A24066)**

(d) Gryphons (griffins)

*Gryphons*, according to Wilber (1969:7), were fabulous creatures that were half lion and half eagle. They were locally known as ‘homa birds’ (Curtis & Razmjou, 2005:51) and were regarded as mythical beasts (Thompson, 2018:2).



**Fig. 4.13.1 An experimental protome, possibly a gryphon**



**Fig. 4.13.2 Detail of the head of a gryphon**



#### 4.2.4.3 Reliefs

##### (a) Creating a relief on a given panel

It remains uncertain exactly how everything was organised, and the reliefs executed. From the texts and research by scholars, one can construct a working schedule. The following is a possible scenario.

The fact that there were different marks from different tools on different figures points to more than one artist working alongside each other. It is not clear whether the artists were divided into teams each with its own leader. The different skills of the artists within a team played a specific role. Models or just a drawing could serve as examples. The sculptors had to follow these examples as far as facial expression and clothing were concerned. In the placement of the animals and the poses of some figures, the ‘sculptors must have had considerable leeway’ (Farkas, 1974:72). This meant that some artistic freedom was allowed. This is in contradiction to the views of Briant (2002:171) who argued that no artistic freedom was allowed.

Here and there, one encounters some individuality (artistic freedom?). For example, the legs and feet of the bird-like image in the winged-ring were usually not true to form and ended in tendrils with a spiral at the tip (cf. Fig. 4.14.1). Then one suddenly encounters a true-to-life depiction from an Ahuramazda depiction on a door jamb of the 100 Column Hall in Persepolis. Here the artist used his own style and the appendages looked more natural – especially the talons instead of spirals (cf. Fig. 4.14.2).



**Fig. 4.14.1 Tail feathers and ‘legs’ ending in a spiral from an Ahuramazda depiction (Ghirshman, 1964:199)**



**Fig. 4.14.2 Tail feathers and ‘natural’ legs ending in talons**

It remains unclear how long it took the sculptors involved to carve the images in one panel.<sup>65</sup> One can only speculate but to create, for example, a whole section like Wing B must have been

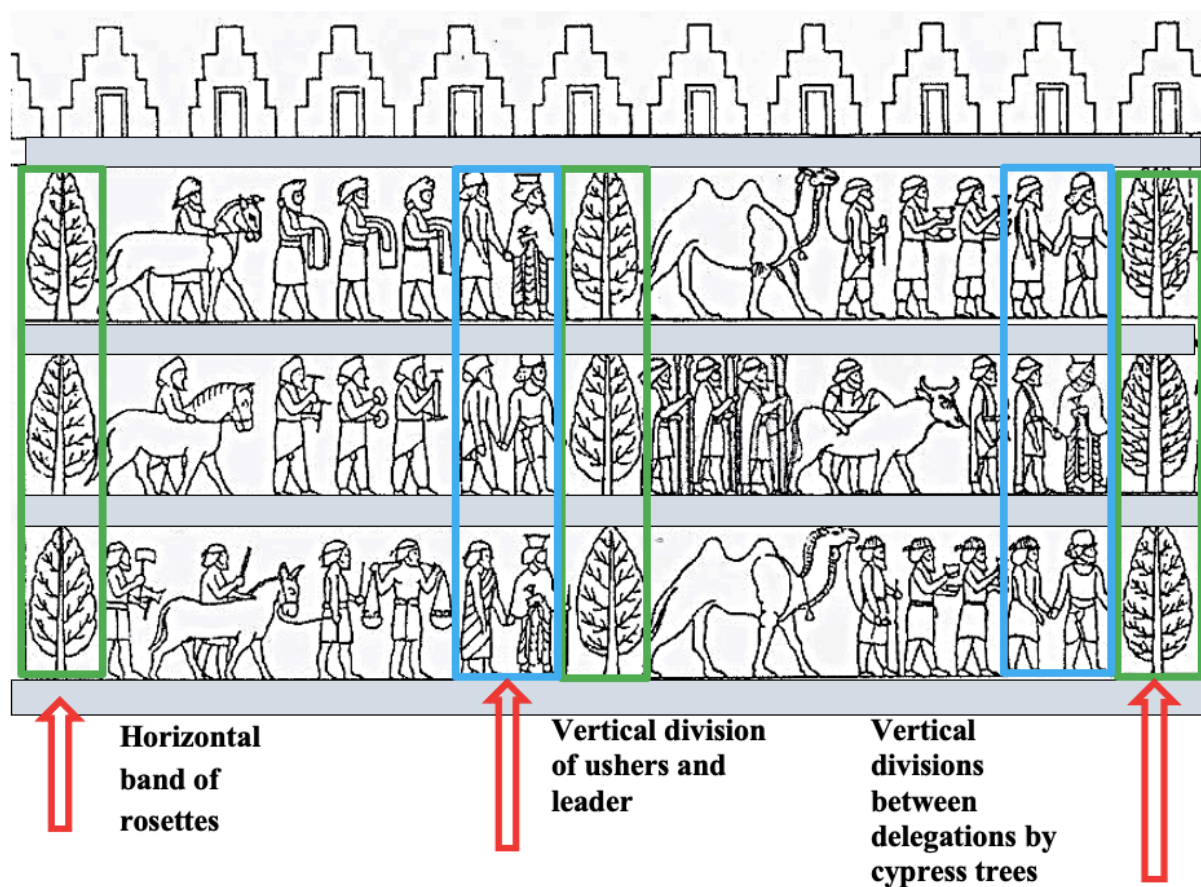
<sup>65</sup> Some tablets of Xerxes’ reign give a tentative indication of the number of sculptors and the length of time required to complete the instructions (cf. Cameron, 1958 in Farkas, 1974:72).

a great effort by many skilled artists. One must also keep in mind that another similar façade was also to be decorated with reliefs.

A specific register on a certain panel was allotted to a specific group. This is demonstrated in six of the panels in three registers (cf. Fig. 4.15). A plan was supplied and perhaps also a model. The kinds of tribute for a specific group were probably also specified.

(b) Work on the eastern façade

The ninety-metre-long rock surface, prepared by the stonemasons, was divided into a grid with precise measurements (cf. Fig. 4.15).



**Fig. 4.15** A diagram of a section of the Apadana Relief on the eastern façade showing the grid with repetitive divisions (Diagram adapted from Walser, 1966: Falttafel 2)

Vertical tiers of trees divided the façade into a number of equal segments. The spacing of each delegation within each segment was further defined. The first two figures of each delegation were aligned one above the other. The rest of the space was occupied by human figures with animals sometimes inserted as well (Farkas, 1974:72).

### 4.3 THE APADANA RELIEFS

#### 4.3.1 Motifs used

Motifs are one of the key units of analysis when looking at a work of art (Nunn, 2019:63). Different motifs were used in abundance and in a repetitive manner in the *Apadana Reliefs*. Most of the reliefs had a symbolic meaning.

##### 4.3.1.1 Crenulations

From a military point of view, they are useless as battlements. They are, however, pleasantly ornamental and crown every wall.



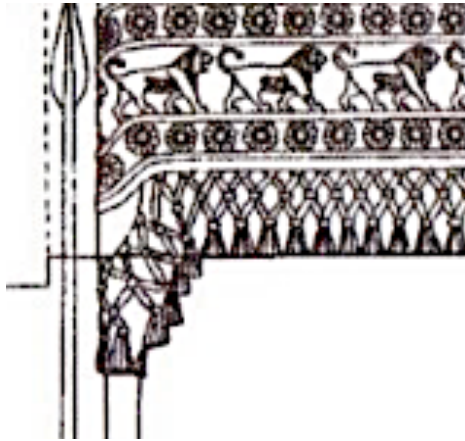
**Fig. 4.16 Stepped crenulations on Wing A of the eastern façade of the Apadana, Persepolis**

In Persepolis, some researchers see the stepped crenulations (Fig. 4.16) as symbols of sacred mountains.<sup>66</sup> In some religions, the temple was conceived as a sacred mountain that brought the earth-disk closer to the heavens. The mountains were the points of contact between earth, air and sky (Wightman, 2006:4). Here it was an object of attention and reverence at all times. Some scholars see the crenulations as monotonous, but I find them a fitting border for all the images. Without a border, these images would appear as if they were hanging in mid-air.

##### 4.3.1.2 Baldachin

A baldachin was a canopy made of richly embroidered material terminating in tassels (Tilia, 1977:72; Brosius, 2006:36; cf. Figs. 4.17.1 & 4.17.2).

<sup>66</sup> The concept of mountains played a dominant role in practical and religious thinking in the ancient Near East (Wightman, 2006:4).



**Fig. 4.17.1** Detail of one corner of the baldachin over the Audience Scene (From Stronach, 2002:396)



**Fig. 4.17.2** Detail of the remains of a baldachin over an Audience scene on a door jamb of the 100 Column Hall. Striding lions (in the red square) move towards the winged ring in the centre

The material was supported by poles and placed over the Audience Scene. Most of the figures in the Audience Scene appear under the baldachin (Koch, 1992:97). Unfortunately, no fragments of this canopy were found during the excavations. However, two blocks with part of a royal canopy were found in another place on the terrace by Herzfeld (Tilia, 1977:72). These blocks probably belonged to similar canopies.

In Egypt, similar representations of the enthroned Pharaoh on a dais under a canopy occur. The canopy was not only used outdoors as protection against the elements e.g., the sun, but was also used indoors (Root, 1979:237). The Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III (859-824 BCE) used a pole-supported canopy as a venue to meet the Babylonian king (Marcus, 1987).

The symbolism of the baldachin was seen as a 'throne heaven' spread over the earthly sphere (Frei & Koch, 1984:90). Root (1979:237) also states that the baldachin undoubtedly had a symbolic meaning as well as a purely practical function. The appearance of striding lions was also symbolic of the power of the monarch. (cf. Figs. 4.17.1, 4.17.2, 4.18 & 4.24.4).

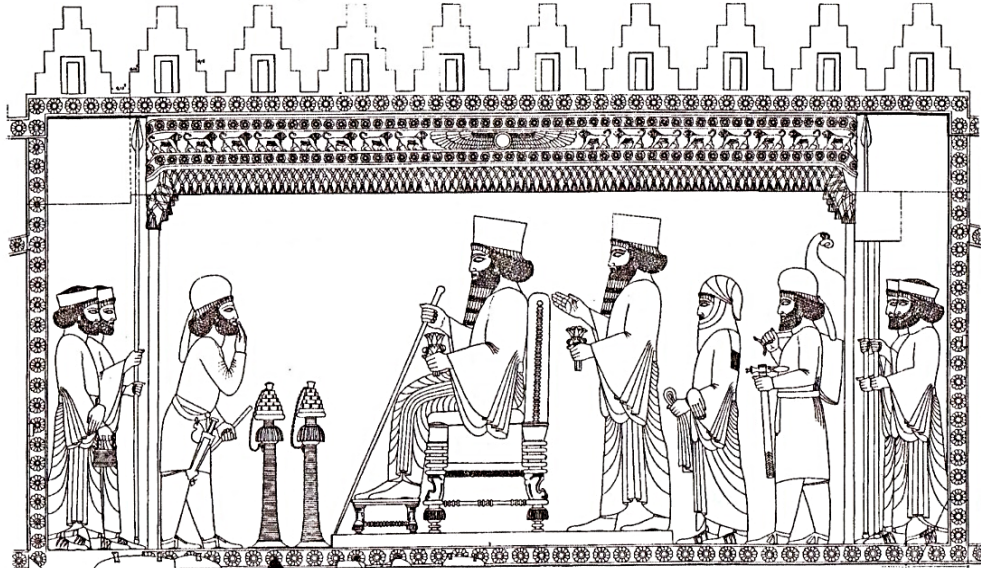
In Persepolis, we can assume that the canopies represented types of awnings under which the king and the crown prince would actually appear on state occasions. Unfortunately, these canopies were certainly never moved to the Treasury together with the Audience Scenes (Tilia, 1977:73).

#### 4.3.1.3 Audience Scene

The Audience Scene depicting the seated king with his attendants was the *locus classicus* of the *Apadana Reliefs* (Garrison, 2013:578; cf. Fig. 4.18). The focus was upon the figure of the king (Tilia, 1979:282) who held the royal insignia in his hands, based on Assyrians examples

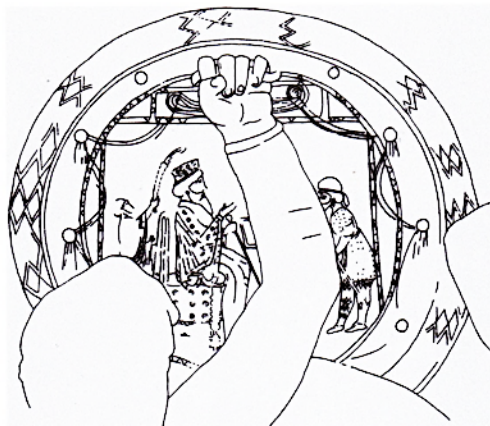


(Gabelmann, 1984:29; cf. 5.5). The enthroned king, in the centre of the audience relief, was a visual documentation of the status of the king (Stronach, 2002:396) and a centrepiece for the Persian monarchy (Gabelmann, 1984:7). The scene reflected the image of a peaceful sovereign (Brosius, 2006:35) who was willing to meet with his subject peoples. There was no visible conflict - only harmony (Frei & Koch, 1984:75).



**Fig. 4.18 King in audience on the central panel on the eastern façade of the Apadana in Persepolis (Stronach, 2002:396)**

The artistic motif of the Audience Scene was also found in other locations. It occurs on coins, clay tablets, and bullae. It was also adapted 'on sarcophagi to depict local rulers' (Frankfort 1969:229). In Fig. 4.19, it is depicted on the inside of a shield.



**Fig. 4.19 The depiction of an audience scene on the inside of a Persian shield on the Alexander sarcophagus (Brosius, 2006:36)**

#### *4.3.1.4 Lion and bull*

The lion-bull combat as a persistent, age-old Near Eastern motif took an important place in the iconography of Persepolis. These images were the only examples in Achaemenid art where

only animals interact with each other (Garrison, 2013:587). The significance of this motif has changed over time (Thompson, 2018:3). In the current era, there is no consensus among scholars about the meaning of the symbolic motif of the lion and bull in combat.

This combat scene almost filled the triangles on both sides of the Apadana audience scene (Fig. 4.20.1). The remaining space was filled with stylised plants e.g., palmettes and cypress trees (Frankfort, 1969:230; Root, 1979:232; Stronach, 2002:387; Garrison, 2013:587).



**Fig. 4.20.1 Lion attacking a bull at eastern Apadana staircase**

One must keep in mind that this motif also occurred as a symbol on the imperial gold coins during the reigns of Cyrus and to the last years of Darius (Calmeyer, 1980:59; cf. Fig. 4.20.2).



**Fig. 4.20.2 A 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE gold, Lydian coin (Croeseid) (Shahbazi, 2011:102)**

*What was the meaning of the symbolism behind the lion and bull motif in Achaemenid art which appeared twenty-seven times in Persepolis?* Finding an answer to this question, with no textual evidence, is not an easy task (Calmeyer, 1980:59). This leaves the field wide open to a subjective interpretation by different scholars (Porada, 1965; Frankfort 1969). Amiet (1980),



Javier Alvarez-Mon (2008), and Thompson (2018) are some of the scholars who interpret the lion-bull combat as a depiction of power (the king) and submission (the enemies or subject people). Some scholars, like Hartner (1965), Wilber (1969), and Gershvitch (1985) hold the view that it was a symbol of the equinox. The first of the two annual equinoxes occur in March – the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere. Hartner<sup>67</sup> also associated this motif with the agricultural calendar (Thompson, 2018:5). One of the objections to Hartner's constellation theory is the sheer variety of animals depicted – not just a lion (*Leo*) and a bull (*Taurus*). Bivar (Calmeyer, 1980:59) posed a radical solution namely *death* and a warning to trespassers to the palace staircases. Perhaps it was a wordless expression to illustrate the king's 'ultimate capacity to regulate the forces of man and nature' (Stronach, 2002:387). According to a suggestion by Root (2002:201-203), the lion-bull images were symbolic expressions of the combined powers of nature harnessed by the empire.

#### 4.3.1.5 Trees

##### (a) Cypress

No consensus has been reached among scholars about the identity of the tree-motif that occurred so abundantly on the *Apadana Reliefs*. Ghirshman (1964:158) identified it as a pine tree (*Pinus prutia*). Roaf (2003-2005:407) also called the trees pines, while Shahbazi (2011:101) and Herzfeld (1941:270) said it was an example of a cypress tree. Some scholars played it safe and just identified it as a conifer. In this study, the trees will be referred to as cypress trees.

Since antiquity, Iranians have held the cypress tree as an auspicious and heavenly tree (Shahbazi, 2011:101). According to Herzfeld (1941:270), the Persepolis cypress was the assimilation of the Assyrian conifer and the indigenous cypress of Persia.

The cypress trees appeared repeatedly as a dividing motif in the processions of tribute bearing delegations (Garrison, 2011:50; cf. Fig. 4.15). These sculptures were done with the delicacy of fine embroidery (Herzfeld, 1941:270). In Figures 4.21.2 - 4.21.4, the left and right sides were mirror images, and this created symmetry in the relief as well as in the drawing.

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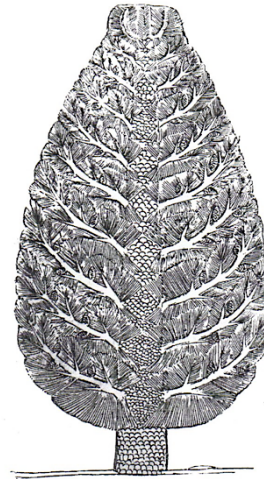
<sup>67</sup> Hartner was an astronomer and did not have a background in history (Thompson, 2018:6).



**Fig. 4.21.1 Cypress of Abarkuh**



**Fig. 4.21.2 Cypress tree dividing two delegations**



**Fig. 4.21.3 Drawing of a dividing cypress tree (Herzfeld, 1941:269)**

It is impossible to tell the exact age of the cypress of Abarkuh (*Cupressus sempervirens*) in Fig 4.21.1 but it is estimated at c. 4000 years (Information from the plaque at the tree).

The cypress tree (cf. Figs. 4.21.2-4.21.4) was regarded as a symbol of mourning and associated with death and the underworld, because it fails to regenerate when it is cut back



**Fig. 4.21.4 Symmetry and artistic skill is illustrated in the magnification of the tip of the cypress tree**

#### (b) Palm tree and palmettes

In the ancient Near East, the palm tree was venerated as a tree of abundance and fruitfulness (Shahbazi, 2011:88; Fig. 4.22.1-4.22.3).



**Fig. 4.22.1 Palm trees on the wall at the temple of Hatshepsut (c. 1490 BCE)**



**Fig. 4.22.2 Part of the remains of the shaft and capital in one of the surviving columns of the Apadana in Persepolis**



**Fig. 4.22.3 A palm tree bearing an abundance of fruits in modern times. Atin Sazeh, Assaluyen**

The shafts and capitals with their coronas of dead fronds displayed emblems of life- and life-giving powers. The date palm was probably polyvalent, having associations with sexuality (and thus the goddess Ishtar), fertility, abundance, riches, divine gifts and, more practically, control over the environment (Garrison, 2011:50). The palm tree also fulfilled a sacred function.

**Palmettes** were motifs that were used as design elements in the decorations at Persepolis. In their most characteristic expression, they resembled the fan-shaped leaves of a palm tree and could therefore be associated with this tree. The upper part of this ornamental motif consisted of five or more leaves fanning upward from a single triangular source at the base (cf. Fig. 4.23). This motif originated in Egypt where it represented life, death, eternal life, and even divinity. Did they perhaps also have the same representation in Persia as in Egypt? In Persepolis, the palmettes appeared in abundance as ‘filling material’.



**Fig. 4.23 Detail of a palmette**

#### *4.3.1.6 Rosettes*

Rosettes have occurred in art since prehistoric times (Seidl & Kriebneck, 2007:443). In the ancient Near East, rosettes as design elements occurred on gates (cf. Fig.6.3.4); ubiquitously on the sculptures at Persepolis (Herzfeld, 1941:233; Pope, 1957:125; Garrison, 2013:589). A few examples of the occurrence of rosettes are the following:

- (i) Border strips above the embroidered canopies above audience scenes.
- (ii) Along the endlessly long relief panels (Pope, 1957:125).
- (iii) Frame for the Audience Scene on three sides.
- (iv) Rosette-banded horizontals dividing the processions on the staircases of the Apadana into three registers (Tilia, 1977:72; cf. Fig. 4.15).



- (v) As decoration on bull protomes.
- (vi) Tiles under pivot stones.

Rosettes also appeared as building decorations. One such an example is the Khorsabad Palace of Sargon II (721-705 BCE). The brick fragment below shows the traces of paint that is still visible (cf. Fig. 4.24.1).



**Fig. 4.24.1** A fragment of a glazed brick with rosettes (Museum of the Oriental Institute of Chicago, Registration no. A11799; Digital no. 31157)

Sargon II of Assyria favoured the rosette on his royal robe, his crown, and wristbands (cf. Figs. 4.24.2 & 4.24.3).



**Fig. 4.24.2** Rosettes adorning Sargon II on an orthostat at Khorsabad (Seidl & Kriebneck, 2007:445)



**Fig. 4.24.3** Rosettes on Sargon II's robe and wristband (The Louvre, Paris, AO19873)

The larger rosettes at the top form part of the rosette frame of the Audience Scene (Fig. 4.25). Rosettes feature on the decoration of the bull protome as well (Fig. 4.26)



**Fig. 4.25 Striding lions between two rosette borders above the canopy over the Audience Scene (OIC. Registration no. A24068\_001; Digital no. 16925)**



**Fig. 4.26 Rosettes as decoration around the neck of the remains of a bull protome (Photo L. Jonker)**

Rosettes were also found on square marble slabs (cf. Fig. 4.27) under pivot stones of all doors and were hidden from sight with its face at the bottom. This brought the image into direct contact with the lower world.




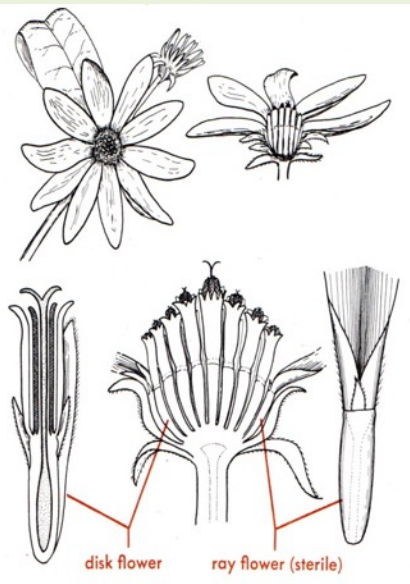
**Fig. 4.27 Square faience tile with traces of polychrome decoration**

Why were rosettes used? Was it just a design element? (Garrison, 2013:589). Different scholars propose different answers to such questions.

Both Root (2002) and Herzfeld (1941) argue that the rosettes also had a symbolic function. According to Root (2002:199-200), the rosettes were ‘a conscious revitalization of the age-old image of the goddess Ishtar as a symbol of the link between kingship and fertility’. According to Herzfeld (1941:233-234), rosettes must have been a symbol of magic virtue.

The rosette motif could have originated from living flowers in nature that belong to the family Asteraceae (Daisy family). Different researchers hold different views on the structure of the flower and the resemblance to modern-day flowers belonging to this family. According to Albenda (1986), there are two types of flowers in this family - the *ligule* and *disc* flowers. Botanically, some of this information is incorrect. There are two types of flowers in the Asteraceae - *ray* flowers and *disc* flowers (Wilson & Loomis, 1957:496 & 506). The ligule is actually part of the ray flower (cf. Table 4.3). Another opinion mentions that the rosette structure was derived from the full view of an open lotus flower. Other researchers state that the rosettes do not relate to a specific plant (Seidl & Krebern timer, 2007:44).

**Table 4.3 Comparison between the daisy and the lotus flowers**

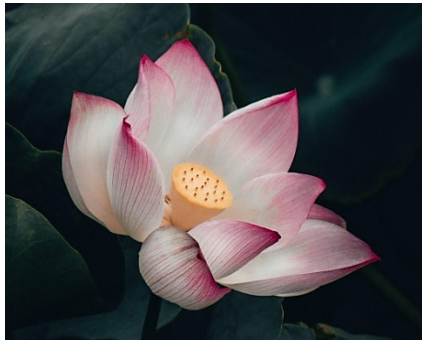
Flower	Description
<p><b>Daisy, belonging to the Family: Asteraceae</b></p>  <p>(Ingva, 2020)</p>	 <p>(Wilson &amp; Loomis, 1957:497)</p> <p>The white parts of the daisy flower are the ligules of the sterile ray flowers with almost rounded tips. The yellow part is actually a collection of a large number of separate disc flowers that are fertile.</p>



**Lotus flower belonging to the Family: Nymphaeaceae**

Centre of a lotus flower with seed pod

There are several layers of sharp, pointed petals. In the centre, there is a round, yellow seed pod with holes through which the seeds are dispersed. The numerous stamens, terminating in light yellow anthers, surround the seed pod.



(Hsu, 2018)



(Nguyen, 2020)

The content in Table 4.3 disputes the lotus as a prototype for the rosette. When the centres of the daisy and the lotus flowers are viewed superficially and from a distance, the centres of the flowers just appear as yellow circles, but on closer examination, even with the naked eye, there is a considerable difference in the detail of the yellow centre.

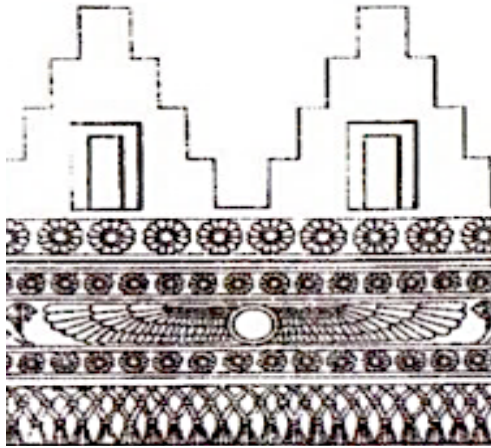
#### 4.3.1.7 The winged sundisk

The symbol of the winged sundisk originated in Egypt where it represented Horus, the Sun god (Ghirshman, 1964:229; Shahbazi, 1974:135) and can be regarded as a solar symbol. The Achaemenid symbol was probably based on the iconography of an Assyrian god in a winged sundisk who is usually identified as Assur (Shenkar, 2014:48). This symbol made its first appearance in the Persian Empire during the reign of Darius I (522-486 BCE) and more specifically on the *Bisitun relief* (Shahbazi, 2011:89). The symbol was repeated a number of times in the Persepolis reliefs and was also found on seals, bullae, and satrapal coinage (Shenkar, 2014:47).

Two forms of the winged ring occur in Persepolis:

- (i) A winged sundisk without a figure (cf. Fig. 4.28.1).
- (ii) A winged sundisk with the depiction of a figure rising from the disk (cf. Fig. 4.28.2) e.g., above the Audience Scene (Garrison, 2009:33) on some of the doorjambs of the 100 Column Hall.

In the Persepolis reliefs, both forms, with and without a figure in the sundisk, are usually depicted as hovering above the king (Strawn, 2008:04) in a gesture of protection.



**Fig. 4.28.1 A winged disc without a human figure (From Fig. 4.15)**



**Fig. 4.28.2 The royal figure in the winged disc (Brosius, 2006:67)**

In both depictions, the sundisk at the centre is flanked by the outstretched wings of a bird. It is not clear whether the bird that was depicted was a falcon or an eagle.

Shahbazi contradicts himself on the bird identification of the winged disc (cf. Table 4.4).

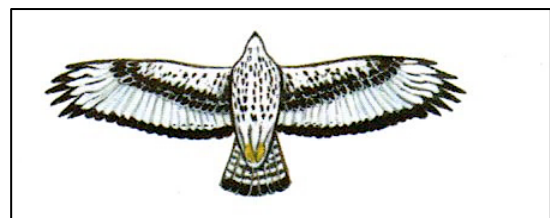
**Table 4.4 Contradictions by Shahbazi in the identification of the bird in the winged ring**

Falcon		Eagle	
Shahbazi	1980:126	Shahbazi	1980:126
Shahbazi	1974:135		
Shahbazi	1980:143 Falcon with wings spread.	Shahbazi	1980:143

In bird taxonomy, these two birds belong to two different families: the falcon to the family Falconidae and the eagle to the family Accipitridae. If one looks at the depictions of the birds of prey, the outstretched wings with rounded tips resemble that of an eagle and not a falcon.



**Fig. 4.29 Falcon with widespread wings (Oberprieler & Cillié, 2002:147)**



**Fig. 4.30 Eagle with widespread wings (Oberprieler & Cillié, 2002:77)**

The falcon has pointed wings and a fairly long tail, while the eagle has rounded wingtips and a short tail. The wingtips of the eagle resemble the illustrations of the winged disc in Figs. 4.28.1 and 4.28.2. Therefore, the identification of a falcon must be ruled out.

*Whom did the figure in the winged ring represent?* The identification of this figure has been one of the most perplexing and often debated questions in the study of Achaemenid religious iconography both in the West and the East (Garrison, 2009:25). Many hypotheses were developed in this area to try and solve the identification problem of the figure in the winged disc.

One must keep in mind that the early Persians lived in a world of visual imagery (Garrison, 2009:7). Was this imagery complemented and/or explained by written records? The royal inscriptions, found in different locations, were of little use for the identification of the figure in the winged disc. An example of a translation of a sentence in one of these inscriptions (DPf) by Darius I reads as follows:

By the grace of Ahuramazda I built this fortress. And Ahuramazda was of such a mind together with *all the gods*, that this fortress (should be) built (Briant, 2002:86; Garrison, 2009:30).

The reader of such an inscription would come to the conclusion that Ahuramazda was the supreme god and that there were many other gods.

The *PFT* (Persepolis Fortification Tablets) provide indirect textual evidence that indicates ‘an exceptionally strong connection with the visual traditions’ (Garrison, 2009:7, 19).

In the West, most scholars see the anthropomorphic image, in the winged ring created by the Achaemenids, as the supreme god Ahuramazda (Ghirshman, 1964:229; Tilia, 1977:72; Kuhrt, 1997:676; Brosius, 2006:32; Strawn, 2008:94; Stronach, 2002:46). According to Shenkar (2014:47), this was the most significant divine image to emerge from Achaemenid art. In Persepolis, this image occurred as reliefs in different places e.g., the doorjambs of the 100 Column Hall.

In direct contrast to the Ahuramazda hypothesis, Shahbazi, as a scholar with sentiments for an Eastern perspective and one of the most active critics against the identification of the Achaemenian symbol as Ahuramazda, argues that the human figure in the winged ring cannot be regarded as a divine image. This figure wears a Persian robe and a crown, therefore typifying Royalty and not Divinity. He also argues that the winged symbol cannot be regarded as Ahuramazda because the Achaemenids did not make any images of any kind of their gods (Shahbazi, 2011:89). However, according to Shenkar (2014:48) a wing attached to a human served as a symbol of the divine or supernatural in the ancient Near East. Therefore, it seems as if Shahbazi’s argument is invalid because the figure in the ring has wings attached to it and can be regarded as divine.

Shahbazi also offered several objections to Ahuramazda as the symbolic, divine figure in the ring in 1974 (141-142). The Iranians borrowed forms of the winged symbol from their subjects to depict their concept of farnah (God-given) Fortune (Shabzi, 1980:119-120). The concept of good fortune bestowed was hypostatized into an independent divinity, Farnah. This heavenly being was given a place in the dwelling of Ahuramazda (Shahbazi, 1980:126).

These incongruent arguments of West and East leave us with more questions than answers. It is not clear whether divine powers are illustrated by the winged ring without an anthropomorphic figure to represent such a power. The recurrent phrase 'by the grace of Ahuramazda' in the royal inscriptions probably points to a close relationship between the god (Ahuramazda) and the king, and it can almost be seen as a kind of 'divine – human symbiosis'. Presently, there is still an ongoing debate among scholars trying to find a solution for the 'Ahuramazda problem'.

For the purpose of this study, the view of a large number of Western scholars will be followed and the representation of the human figure within the winged ring will be referred to as Ahuramazda although this identification has not been fully proven.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

Certain aspects of architecture and art were only touched upon in this chapter with the focus on the Apadana at Persepolis. The art was not subordinate to the architecture but complimented it.

Very few examples of Achaemenid sculpture in the round are available. The reason for the inclusion of the statue of Darius in the discussion on art was twofold: it was the best example of Achaemenid sculpture in the round available and the inscriptions on the robe of Darius and the base of the statue contained invaluable information about the different peoples of the empire.

Reliefs were the type of art that dominated the decorations of the Apadana. They not only decorated the blank exterior wall spaces but also provided a symbolic meaning. Even the different colours of the paint on the reliefs were symbolic.

Special procedures were followed by highly skilled craftsmen and artists from different parts of the empire. Specific directions had to be followed but here and there artistic freedom was used.

The different motifs used in the reliefs also had symbolic meanings and were used to illustrate certain aspects of life. The age-old custom of the peoples of the ancient Near East, who lived in a world of symbolism, was thus upheld.

The figure in the sundisk represents Persian royal iconography with the addition of divine symbols like the sundisk and feathered wings.

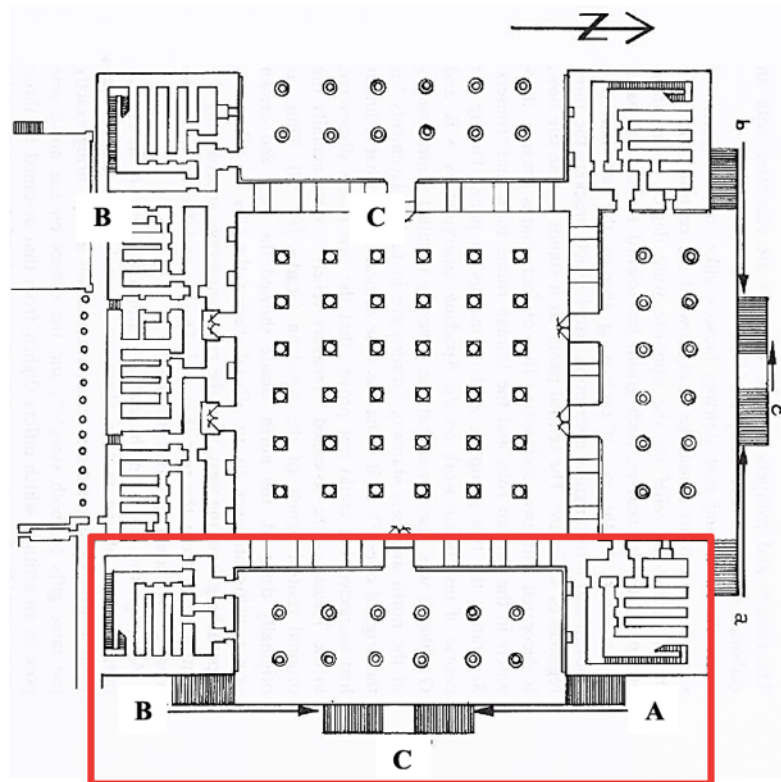
## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE APADANA RELIEFS: AN ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

‘No other kind of relic or text from the past offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times. In this respect images are more precise and richer than literature’ (Berger, 1972:10).

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

On viewing the reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadana, one is confronted by a multitude of images that include human figures, animals, and plants arranged in a specific way. These images represent different motifs, each with its own symbolism. Because of the extent of these reliefs, only the central Panel (C) and the North Wing (A) of the **eastern façade** will be analysed in this chapter (cf. Fig. 5.1).



**Fig. 5.1 Plan of the Apadana (from Root, 1979:80). Eastern façade in red rectangle. A = North wing (guards, nobles, chariots, etc.); B= South wing (Tribute groups) and C= Central panel**

The current, as well as the original, Panel C will be looked at in detail. The analysis of the north wing A will only be done superficially to complete the picture and to put the whole



representation on the eastern façade in perspective. The reliefs of the south Wing **B** will be discussed and analysed in the chapters to follow and is the main focus of this study (cf. 1.2).

To determine the meaning of the images, a combined iconographic methodology will be followed by combining the methods of Panofsky (1955) and Keel (1992) as the main contributors (cf. 1.7). A comparative analysis will also be followed where applicable.

Although texts enhance the meaning of the reliefs and offer information to the researcher as an aid in the identification of the visual material, they are very limited. Available material will assist in exploring the meaning of the reliefs.

## 5.2 SOME RELIEFS ON THE EASTERN FAÇADE OF THE APADANA

One must keep in mind that the reliefs on the northern and the eastern sides formed mirror images (Gabelmann, 1984:13).

Table 5.1 serves as a representation of the northern and eastern façades and how they relate to one another.

**Table 5.1 Arrangement of the reliefs of the northern and eastern façades of the Apadana forming mirror images**

Northern façade			Eastern façade		
<b>b</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>North wing.</b> Guards, nobles, etc. facing east towards the centre.	<b>Central panel.</b> Current reliefs Original audience scene (‘Treasury relief’).	<b>East wing.</b> Tribute/gift bearers facing west towards the centre.	<b>East wing.</b> Tribute/gift bearers facing west towards the centre.	<b>Central panel.</b> Current reliefs Original audience scene (‘Treasury relief’).	<b>North wing.</b> Guards, nobles, etc. facing east towards the centre.

### 5.2.1 The current central panel – *in situ*

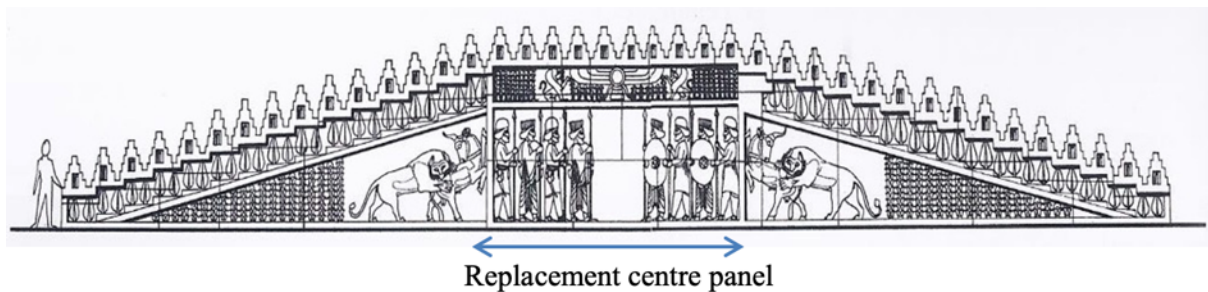
#### 5.2.1.1 Total reading of the current central panel

The 21<sup>st</sup> century visitor to Persepolis sees a panel in the centre (cf. Figs. 5.2.2 & 5.4.1) that depicts four figures on each side with a blank rectangle in the middle. The rectangle was ‘intended to bear inscriptions but was left empty’ (Shahbazi, 2011:65). The column remainders of the Apadana and part of the palace of Darius can also be seen in the background (cf.

Fig. 5.2.1).



**Fig. 5.2.1 The current central panel of the northern façade of the Apadana (Koch, 2001:27)**



**Fig. 5.2.2 Line drawing of the current central panel of the northern façade of the Apadana with the replacement scene in the centre (Shahbazi, 2013:84)**

The triangular spaces on both sides contain images of two animals, as well as two different types of 'trees' (cf. Fig. 5.3).



**Fig. 5.3 Triangular space filled with cypress trees, palmettes, and the lion and the bull motif. It is framed by rows of rosettes**

All these images – humans, animals, and plants are framed by four-stepped crenulations with a niche in the middle and bordered by rosette rows (cf. Fig. 4.4). If the panel is viewed as a whole, a definite symmetry is visible.

#### 5.2.1.2 *Analytical reading of the current replacement panel*

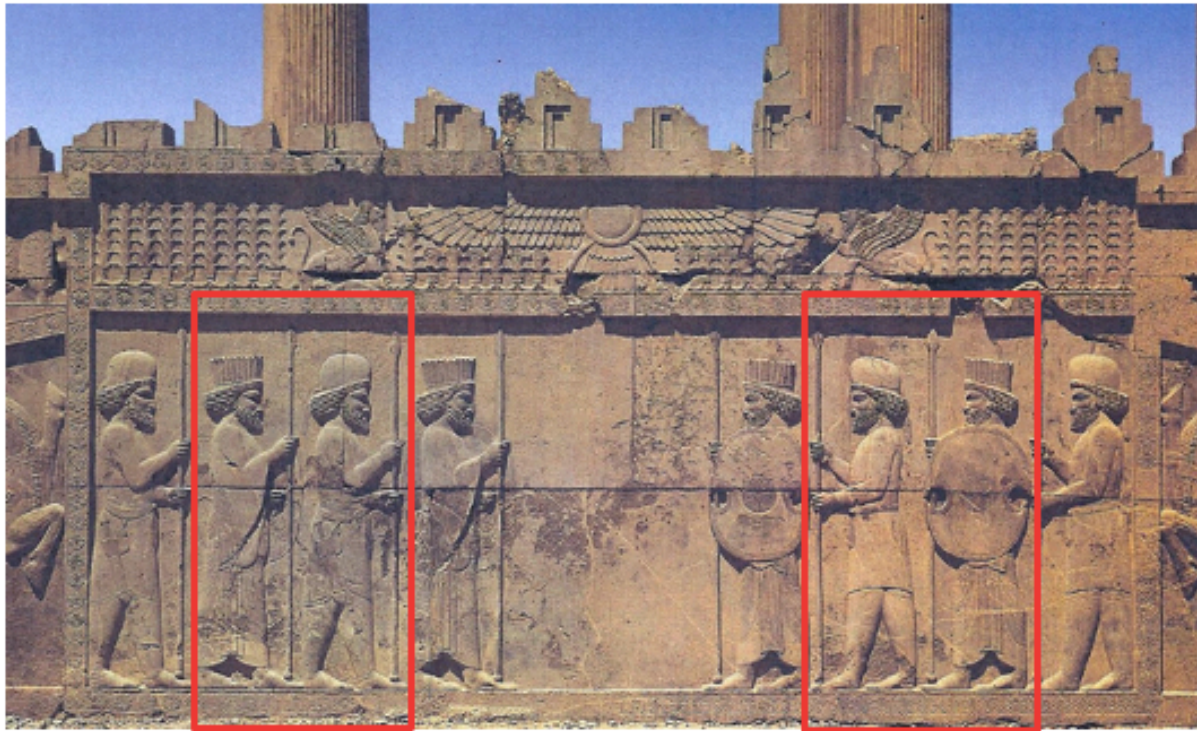
The analytical reading of this panel will be read vertically from top to bottom with a more detailed discussion of the human figures. Four-stepped crenulations with a niche in the middle form the uppermost border and crown every wall (cf. 4.3.3.1). Most of the crenulation are in a precarious state of preservation. Directly below the crenulations follows the border of rosettes (cf. Fig. 4.4) which extends into a triangular frame for the motif of a god, symbolised as a winged disc and flanked by two winged lions. The rest of the space in this frame is filled with palmettes which occur as the crowning elements on segmented stalks and cypress trees with the lion-and-bull motif closest to the central panel.

The central panel in Fig. 5.4.1 contains eight guards confronting each other – four on each side of a blank stone space. The four figures on each side consist of alternating Persian and Median guards wearing the same hairstyle and beard. The Persian guards are identified by their fluted headdress and a Persian court robe while the Medes wear a fairly tall, rounded cap with a ribbon-like structure at the back, and a long, tight coat almost reaching the knees and tied by a belt to which a short sword (*akinakes*) is fastened (cf. Figs. 5.8.1 & 5.8.2). Long trousers and laced shoes complete their outfit (Porada, 1965:156; Strawn, 2008:92; cf. Figs. 5.4.2 & 5.4.3).

In Fig. 5.4.2, a Persian and a Mede from the left-hand side are depicted and in Fig. 5.4.3, a Persian and a Mede from the right-hand side. The Persians on both sides wear the same headdress and a pleated robe and carry the same kind of spear ending in a round structure resting on the front foot (in Fig. 5.4.2 on the left foot and in Fig. 5.4.3 on the right foot). In the clothing of the Persian in Fig. 5.4.2, a *kandys* is also visible, as well as the outline of the shield he is holding in his left hand (cf. red triangle for the outline of part of the shield). One can assume that in Fig. 5.4.3 the *kandys* is hidden behind the shield in his left hand because a small part of the garment is visible in the red circle. These figures in 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 are actually also mirror images and follow a symmetrical arrangement.



**Fig. 5.4.1 Current reliefs of Persian and Median guards depicted below on the central panel of the eastern façade of the Apadana (Matthiae, 1999:252)**



**Fig. 5.4.2 A Persian and a Mede from the left-hand side**



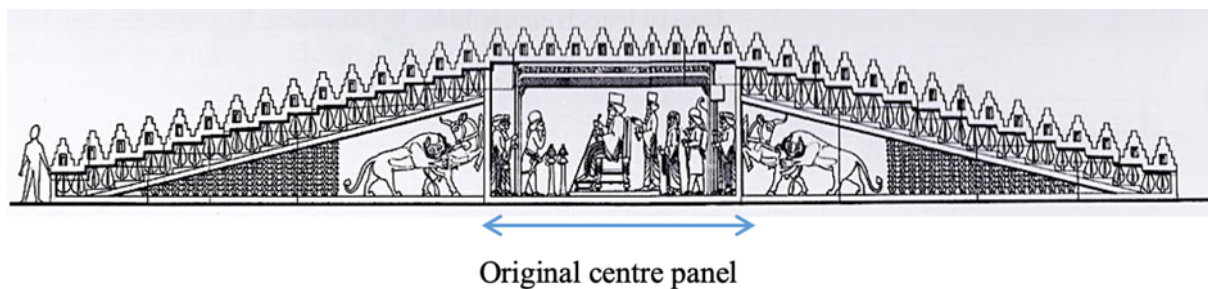
**Fig. 5.4.3 A Persian and a Mede from the right-hand side**

### 5.2.2 The original central panel

In 1936, American excavators discovered two big reliefs representing royal audience scenes in the Treasury at Persepolis. However, it was not until 1971 that the Tilia and co-workers illustrated that these two reliefs were nothing less than the original centre panels of the northern and eastern façades of the Apadana (Tilia, 1977:69). They are referred to by scholars as the Treasury relief or the Audience relief. Both these names are descriptive of the reliefs. In this study, they will be called the Audience reliefs because they will be compared with other audience reliefs not found in a treasury (cf. Table 5.5). One can only speculate on the reason why and when they were removed from their original position. Was it political or a change in the ceremonial character of Persepolis? (Tilia, 1977:70).

#### 5.2.2.1 Total reading of the original central panel: Audience relief

In c. 400 BCE, the visitor to Persepolis would have seen a totally different scene in the centre (cf. Fig. 5.5). There was little symmetry in the layout, as seen in the current central panel, and a completely different arrangement of figures with different identities and status.



**Fig. 5.5 Line drawing of the original audience scene on the central panel of the eastern façade of the Apadana (Shahbazi, 2011:95-96)**

On a dais in the centre, there is a seated figure on an armless ‘chair’ (throne) with the feet on a footstool. Behind him, also on the dais, stands another figure. These two figures are larger than the other figures in the relief. On the right, behind the standing figure on the dais, are two more standing figures carrying specific objects. Only one figure appears in front of the seated figure along with two incense burners. All these figures are protected by a baldachin (canopy) overhead (cf. 4.3.1.2) that is held in position by a pole on each side. Just outside the poles, two figures on each side are visible. A winged disc is visible directly over the head of the seated person.

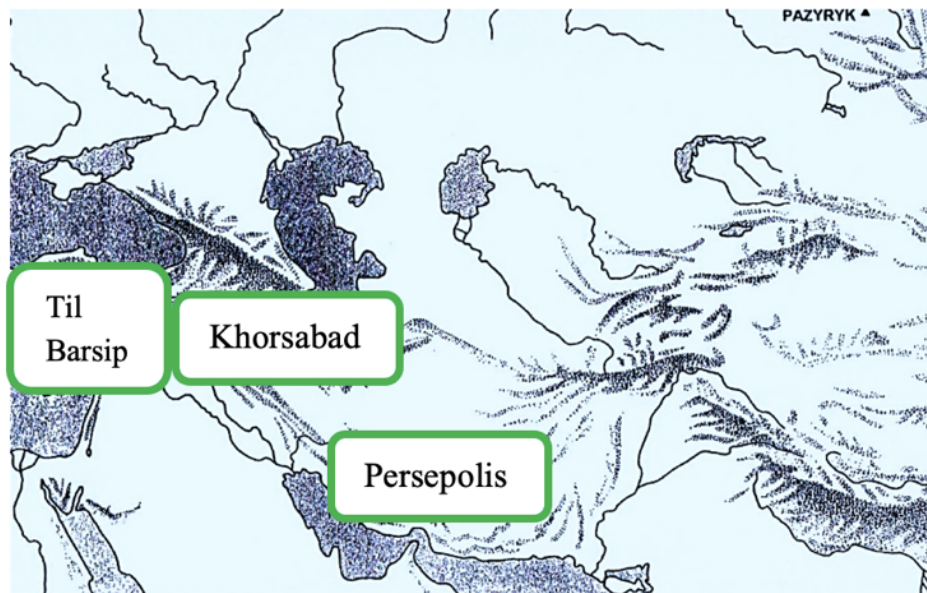
Before an analytical reading of the Audience Scene is done, the influence of similar scenes in Assyrian art will be established (cf. Table 5.5).



### 5.2.2.2 A comparison of the Audience Scene motif of Tiglath-Pileser III (Til Barsip), Sargon II (Khorsabad), and Darius I (Persepolis)

Sai'di (2006:77) states that the 'origins of the concept of a throne in the Achaemenid monarchical system are lost in antiquity'. However, audience scenes occurred in different places and at different times in the ancient world. Audience scenes from Til Barsip and Khorsabad will be compared to that of Persepolis (cf. Figs. 5.6.1-5.6.4). According to Gabelmann (1984:7), the Audience Scene not only occurred in different places at Persepolis but also formed the focal point of the reliefs on the northern and eastern façades of the Apadana. Examples of Assyrian audience scenes (e.g., that of Sargon II and Tiglath-Pileser III) were also mentioned. This will be illustrated in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

The location of Til Barsip, Khorsabad, and Persepolis are indicated in Map 5.1. The distance between Til Barsip and Persepolis is approximately 1600 km.



Map 5.1 Til Barsip, Khorsabad, and Persepolis (Stronach, 2002:393)

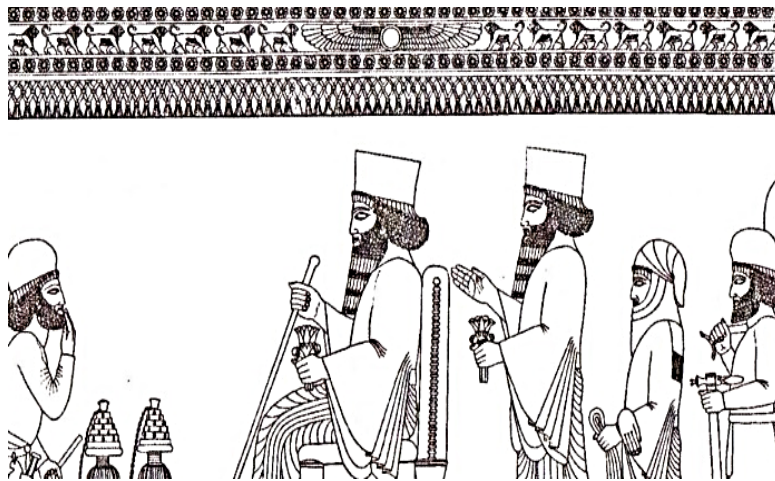


Fig. 5.6.1 Painting at Til Barsip of Tiglath-Pileser III on the throne receiving tribute bearers (Second half of 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE) (Matthiae, 1999:85)





**Fig. 5.6.2 King Sargon II and two attendants on reliefs at Khorsabad (Late 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE)  
Plate 70, Room 6, Slab 11 (Drawing by Flandin in Albenda 1986)**



**Fig. 5.6.3 Audience scene on the eastern side of the Apadana in Persepolis (6th century BCE)  
(Stronach, 2002:99)**






**Fig. 5.6.4 Modern artistic recreation of an Audience scene inside the Apadana  
(Rezaeian, 2004:35)**

The pomp and circumstance in the recreated Audience scene (cf. Fig. 5.6.4) illustrates the grandeur of the occasion. The richly embroidered baldachin, with its rows of lions striding towards the winged disc, is clearly illustrated. The rich colours of the robes of the royal figures stand out amid the rest of the human figures in the scene.

The age-old motif of an audience scene was included in the planning of the *Apadana Reliefs*. Table 5.2 below illustrates how examples of some earlier depictions influenced the rendering of the *Apadana Reliefs*. Table 5.3 then serves as a summarised comparison between the different audience scenes.

**Table 5.2 Comparison between the depictions during the reign of three different monarchs**

Reign of king	Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE) Assyria	Sargon II (721-705 BCE) Assyria	Darius I (522-486 BCE) Xerxes (486-464 BCE) Persia
King	 <p>Seated in the centre on a high-backed throne with armrests. Stands on a low dais. Feet rest on a footstool (From Matthiae, 1999:85).</p>	 <p>No throne depicted. Khorsabad relief (The Louvre, Paris. AO19873-AO19874).</p>	 <p>Seated on a throne in the centre. Back of the throne shoulder height. Armless. Stands on a low dais. Feet rest on a footstool. From plaster cast of the original audience relief on northern façade of the Apadana (The National Museum of Iran).</p>

### Crown



Very little detail available.



More detail visible.



No detail on crown.

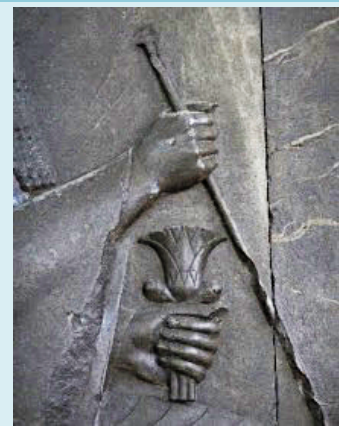
### Flower in the hand of the king



Flower in left hand. Staff in right hand (Matthiae, 1999:85).



Two flowers and bud in left hand of Sargon II (The Louvre, Paris. AO19873-AO19874).



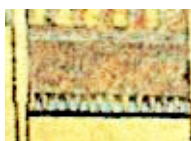
Flower (lotus?) in left hand. In right hand, a convoluted staff ending in a knob.

From the Audience Scene in the National Museum of Iran.



**Textiles**

Fabric over throne seat and back. Ending in tassels.



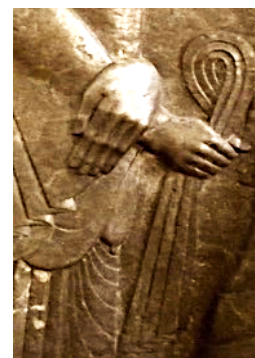
Colourful robe of king.



Part of Sargon's robe.



Detail of robe in rectangle is decorated with twelve petalled rosettes.



Eunuch behind crown prince holding towel or scarf in his right hand.

**Table 5.3 Comparative table of audience scenes from different times and places**

Where?	Til Barsip	Khorsabad	Persepolis
What?	Audience scene (cf. Fig. 5.7.1)	Audience scene (cf. Fig. 5.7.2)	Audience scene (cf. Fig. 5.7.3)
When?	During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE).	During the reign of Sargon II (721-705 BCE)	During the reign of Darius I (522-486 BCE) and Xerxes (486-464 BCE).
Medium	Painting	Carved stone relief	Carved stone relief
Who?	King sitting on throne on a dais.	King standing.	King sitting on throne on a dais.
Directly behind the king	Attendants directly behind the king.	Retinue behind the king.	The crown prince.
In front of the king	Probably the crown prince.		High official – hand-held up; body bent

Above the king			Embroidered canopy supported by poles. Ahuramazda
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### 5.2.2.3 Analytical reading of the original central panel

Levels 2 and 3 of the combined Panofsky/Keel method (cf. 4.5) will be applied in this analytical reading.

According to Klingbeil (1999:164), one should aim at the primary objects during the analysis process. This becomes a problem when some parts of the primary objects (original reliefs) are missing or damaged. The researcher must then rely on that which is available in the form of extant material, photographs, drawings and comparative material.

#### (a) LEVEL 1 (Pre-iconographic description): Audience scene

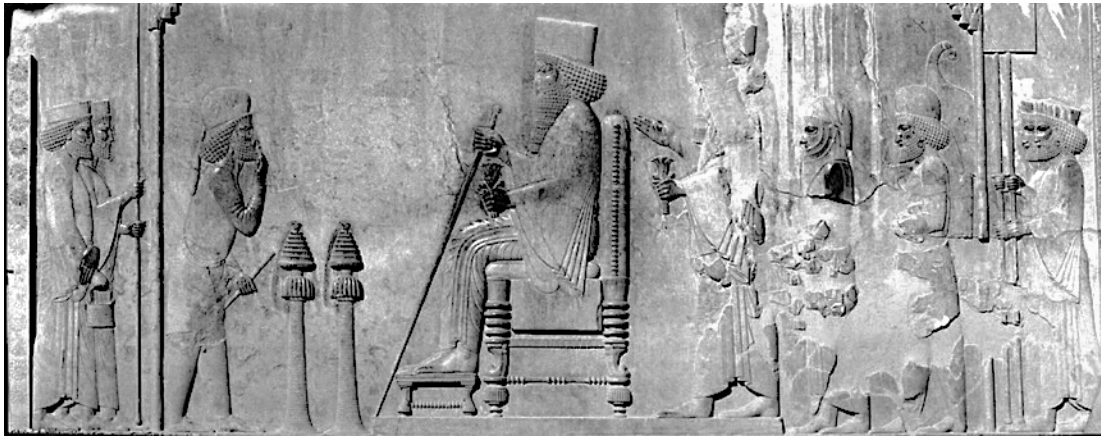
*Decorated forms and motifs.* In this study, the reliefs as form will be incorporated into the analysis process.<sup>68</sup> Some of the motifs that were present in the Audience Scene (cf. Figs. 5.7.1 & 5.7.2) - crenulations at the top, the baldachin over the Audience Scene, rosettes framing the scene, and the lion-bull combat flanking the Audience Scene (cf. 4.3.1) will be identified. Some of these motifs also served as decoration.

*How are forms and motifs recognised and expressed?* Looking at form in a multifaceted way will contribute to finding the meaning of the images.

In the Audience Scene, there was definite hierarchic scaling of human figures. The two figures on the dais were sculpted on a larger scale than their 'attendants'. The seated figure, with his feet on a footstool, wearing a crown and dressed in royal robes (Stronach, 2002:390) and holding the royal insignia<sup>69</sup> pointed to a king. The figure behind the king also appeared on the dais and held a lotus flower with two buds, which also indicated royalty.

<sup>68</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century CE, the concept of form and form analysis became an independent method in iconography (Weissenrieder & Wendt, 2005:13).

<sup>69</sup> A convoluted sceptre with a knob (probably of gold) in his right hand and a lotus flower with two buds in his left hand. Similar flowers do occur in the Persepolis reliefs but never with buds (Koch, 1992:93).



**Fig. 5.7.1** Remains of the original Audience scene, cut in low reliefs in stone, on the eastern façade (In the Treasury at Persepolis)



**Fig. 5.7.2** The repaired remains of the original Audience scene, cut in low reliefs in stone, on the northern façade (In the National Museum of Iran)

Several questions now arise. Which enthroned king is depicted in this scene? Who is the figure behind the king on the dais? (cf. Table 5.6). The other figures in the Audience Scene are portrayed on a much smaller scale. A detailed discussion of these figures and photographs to show the detail appear later in this chapter (cf. Tables 5.5-5.7; cf. Figs. 5.6-5.8).

**Table 5.4** Different identifications for the seated and standing figures on the dais

Seated figure	Standing figure	Source
Darius	Xerxes	Frankfort, 1969:229
		Lloyd, 1971:243
		Farkas, 1974:56
		Shahbazi, 2011:95
		Garrison, 2013:578



<b>Xerxes</b>	Crown prince	Amiet et al., 1981:18 Cahill, 1985:385 Tilia, 1977:69 Frei & Koch, 1984:71
<b>King</b>	Crown prince	Briant, 2002:217 Brosius, 2006:35 Mousavi, 2012:20

The information in Table 5.4 gives an idea of different identifications by a number of scholars. It is by no means a complete list, but it does show some of the disagreements about the identification in a few sources. It is best to play it safe and just identify the figures as the King and the crown prince.

*Phenomena representing a motif (cf. 4.3).* An evolution in methodology has occurred, from mere description to description and interpretation to solely interpretation of representations of images. How can one interpret a visual image if you have not analysed it as a phenomenon? Therefore, one has to go back to Panofsky's three-staged model as the basic model which includes description as well as interpretation to establish the meaning of an image or group of images. Using the combined Panofsky/Keel method in three levels enhances the resultant meaning of the visual image.

In the case of the *Apadana Reliefs*, the sense of sight is paramount and will provoke certain thoughts and ideas. Phenomenological analysis assumes a certain pre-knowledge. What does this pre-knowledge entail? To know how changes in the manner in which particular themes are portrayed, evolved over time. You cannot interpret an image if you do not know and understand what is portrayed. The interpreter should also familiarise him/her with the context - historic, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds - in which the reliefs were created.

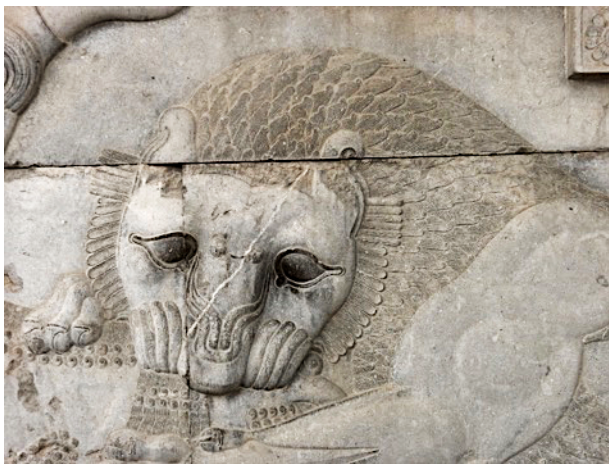
*Composition: Size, scale, and colours.* On viewing the whole Panel (C) of the eastern façade of the Apadana staircase, the eye is drawn to the scene at the centre – especially to the larger-than-life figures of the king and the crown prince behind him. Their appearance on a raised platform reinforces their importance. All the other figures in this audience scene are smaller in size. The figures in front of the king, behind the king, and the images in the triangles will be discussed in Level 2 under compositional unity.

*Image quality: Original or copy.* The quality of the reliefs varies in the central Panel (C). The baldachin over the Audience Scene is almost absent. One has to rely on available fragments to

reconstruct the whole or look at the baldachin on one of the door jambs of the 100 Column Hall to assist in a reconstruction (cf. Fig. 4.17.3). In contrast, the quality of the lion-and-bull images, in the triangles flanking the Audience Scene, are outstanding and well preserved (cf. Fig. 5.4).

*Preservation of image.* If one compares the mirror images of the Audience reliefs (cf. Figs 5.3.1 & 5.3.2), it is obvious that large parts of the Audience reliefs were eroded away or could have been mutilated by visitors. Thanks to art restorers, the Audience Scene in the National Museum of Iran (cf. Fig. 5.3.2) gives an idea of the original relief work. However, these restorers could only work with the remains of the relief e.g., the canopy and the symbol for the god are missing in both the Apadana audience scenes. Fortunately, in the Audience Scenes on some of the door jambs of the 100 Column Hall, enough of the canopy and the symbol for the deity remained for artists to complete descriptions and drawings thereof (cf. Figs. 4.17.1 & 4.17.2).

*Skill of artist.* The technical quality is apparent in the detail of the reliefs. One only has to look at the detail in Figures 5.8 and 5.9 to realise the skill of some of the artists. They do not only showcase the skill of the artist, but also the high-quality craftsmanship.



**Fig. 5.8 Detail of the lion's head in one of the lion-and-bull scenes**



**Fig. 5.9 Detail of hands of the eunuch holding a towel or scarf. The fingers and nails are superbly rendered**

*Type of technique used.* By the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, tools for creating low reliefs on a block of stone were limited (cf. 4.2.1.2). Throughout the terrace proper, which included Panel C, the reliefs were finely dressed with limited tools and then smoothed down with rasps and files.

In certain places, traces of holes are visible where metal (gold, bronze, or iron) could have been applied. Rare vestiges of paint are indications that the reliefs were once covered in colour (Frankfort, 1969:230; cf 4.2.2.1). Portions of the reliefs, which could have included the

Ahuramazda fragment (cf. Fig. 4.5), could have been purposely stippled ‘with a toothed chisel to prepare them for paint’ (Lerner, 1973:122). Techniques to manufacture and apply the paint had to be developed.

*Decoration quality.* A fair number of reliefs are still in an acceptable condition. The reliefs can be seen as decorations which, in turn, can sometimes be decorated with paint.

Colour as decoration was discussed in the previous chapter (cf. 4.2.2.1(e)). According to some scholars e.g., Nagel (2013:596); Frankfort (1969:230); Lloyd (1971:246); and Lerner (1973:116-122), the reliefs were decorated in different colours. They mention the following colours: turquoise, lapis lazuli blue, scarlet, green, purple, and yellow.

Scholars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century only see an extraordinary number of grey reliefs at Persepolis. It is hard to imagine what the reliefs of the Apadana looked like in bright colours. One must also keep in mind that Persian reliefs had brightly coloured Assyrian prototypes (Lloyd, 1971:246).

## (b) LEVEL 2

The focus on this level will rely more on Keel’s analysis because Panofsky based his analysis mainly on the knowledge of literary sources and this presents a problem when very limited written sources are available. One, therefore, has to interpret the images in their own right.

*Themes and concepts.* The enthroned king in audience, with the royal insignia and larger than life depiction, is the main theme and focus point and also reflects the supreme power of the monarch. Trusted attendants are behind and in front of him (Garrison, 2013:577). Although political, judicial, and military power was ascribed to him, the king was not seen as a god-king. In the original, complete scene, with the baldachin and the winged disc as a symbol for Ahuramazda [a god?] (cf. 4.3.1.7), the status of the king as ruler was endorsed (Stronach, 2002:46).

*Combination into meaningful units.* In the central Audience scene, the king is not on his own. The other figures under the baldachin, as well as those just outside the baldachin, had a role to play. Every figure in this Audience scene has a specific stature and they all form part of the unit represented as an Audience scene.

The two figures, on the dais, are depicted larger than life but that has very little to do with actual body size. Was this an example of hierarchic scaling?<sup>70</sup> One can also see it as an indication of the intention to emphasize their importance (Weissenrieder & Wendt, 2005:14).

<sup>70</sup> Hierarchic scaling was common in Greek art but less common in Egyptian and Assyrian art (Frankfort, 1969:229).

These units developed independently from textual sources (Klingbeil, 1999:164). The figures behind and in front of the royal figures all contribute to a meaningful unit.

*Compositional unity.* Composition is formed through group structures into more complex scenes (Weissenrieder & Wendt, 2005:14). An example of such a composition, the Audience Scene, where a group was illustrated, will be discussed in detail. One must also keep in mind that there was a compositional link to the lion and bull images in the adjacent triangles. Their appearance on both sides of the Audience Scene in the centre provided symmetry to panel C and contributed to the compositional unity (cf. 4.3.1). The contribution of Wings A and B will also be touched upon.

*Detailed analytical reading of the Audience Scene on the northern façade.*<sup>71</sup> ‘How forms and motifs are recognised’ and expressed were already discussed (cf. 5.2.2.3). A detailed analysis of the Audience Scene will be illustrated and analysed in Table 5.5 below.

*The seated king in the centre and the crown prince directly behind him.* The enthroned monarch wears a royal robe and crown with the royal insignia in his hands.

The crown prince shares the dais with the enthroned king and touches the throne with his right hand which is raised in salutation. His proximity, his size, and the fact that he also holds a lotus flower with two buds in his left hand is an indication of his royal status (cf. Fig. 5.10).







**Fig. 5.10 Detail of the king and crown prince on the northern façade of the Apadana (National Museum of Iran)**

<sup>71</sup> The Audience Scene on the northern façade that will be used in this section is the restored relief that shows clear detail (National Museum of Iran).



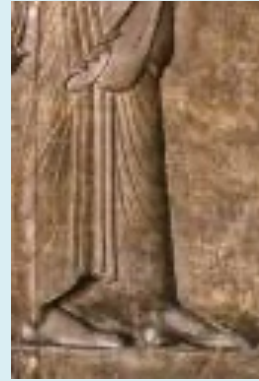
**Table 5.5 Detailed analytical reading of the different body parts and clothing of the king and crown prince**

	King	Crown prince
<b>Head</b>	 <p>Crown damaged. Rounded hairdo at the back. Facial features damaged. Beard similar to that of the crown prince.</p>	 <p>Crown damaged. Hairdo at the back smaller and not so rounded. Facial features very clear – especially the nose and eyes.</p>
<b>Upper body</b>	 <p>The king holds a convoluted sceptre in his right hand. This ends in a knob and was probably made of gold. In the left hand, he holds a lotus flower with two buds on either side. The shape of the right arm is clearly visible through the <i>kandys</i>.</p>	 <p>The right hand of the crown prince is raised in salutation and touches the throne. In the left hand he also holds a lotus flower with two buds. The shape of the right arm is clearly visible through the <i>kandys</i>.</p>



**Lower body**

King's feet resting on a footstool. The shoes are tied around the ankle with a strap and a 'button' in the red circle. Part of a carved right leg of the throne is visible.



Lower part of the body on the footstool. Distinct folds of a royal robe are visible. The shoes are similar to that of the king.

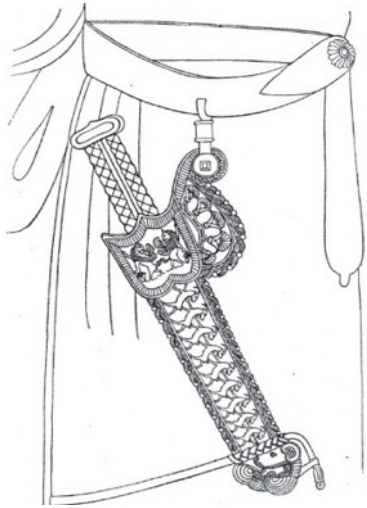
*Two figures directly behind the royal figures on the dais.* Directly behind the crown prince is the figure of a eunuch carrying a piece of material. He holds his left hand over the right wrist. This iconographic element was already present in the neo-Sumerian, neo-Assyrian, and neo-Elamite Periods. It is possible that this hand-over-wrist gesture was to a large extent attendant upon a divinity. In Persepolis, however, the figures who make this gesture 'are transposed into the earthly sphere and are attendant upon the king and not upon a divinity' (Root, 1979:272-275; cf. Fig. 5.11; Table 5.6).



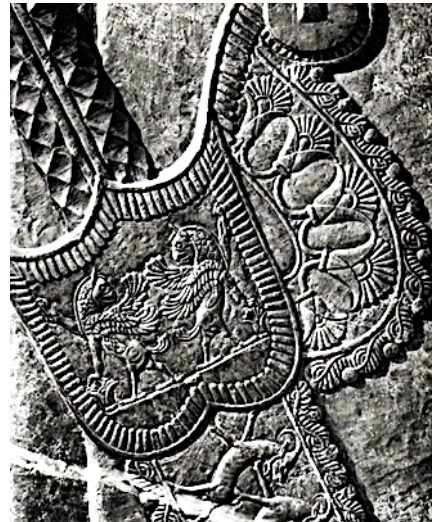
**Fig. 5.11 A eunuch and weapon bearer directly behind the royal figures on the dais**

In contrast to the accepted western identification on the descriptive plaque next to the Audience Scene in the National Bastan Museum of Iran, in Tehran, the figure is identified as '*a clergy man (a Zoroastrian High Priest) with a head-band, a mouth mask and textile in his hand which might belong to an incense burner in front of the king*'.

He is followed by a royal weapon bearer in Median dress who carries a *gorytos* over his shoulder, a battle-axe in his right hand, and an *akinakes* tied to his side (Koch, 1992:93; cf. Fig. 5.12.1). The gold sword cover (*mykes*) was exquisitely decorated with the finest detail (cf. Fig. 5.12.2).



**Fig. 5.12.1** One end of the *akinakes* was attached to a Median belt (Frankfort, 1969:229)



**Fig. 5.12.2** Detail of part of the gold sword cover of an *akinakes* (Ghirshman, 1964:241)

**Table 5.6** Detailed analytical reading of the different body parts and relevant clothing of the weapon bearer and the eunuch

	Royal weapon bearer	Eunuch
<b>Head</b>	 <p>The headdress of the weapon bearer is not quite clear. It could be a wide fillet(?). A row of curls is visible on the forehead. Fairly short hairdo at the back (eight rows of curls) and a short</p>	 <p>The eunuch<sup>72</sup> wears a bashlyk headdress with a row of curls on the</p>

<sup>72</sup> In this study, the western identification, *eunuch*, will be used.

beard (seven rows of curls). An earring is also visible. The essential features - eyes, nose and mouth are finely carved, but there is no facial expression.

forehead, a Persian robe but no *kandys*. The essential features - eyes, nose and mouth are finely carved, but there is no facial expression.

### Middle torso



The royal weapon bearer carries an axe in his right hand and the handle of the *gorytos* in his left hand. The garment covers his arms and pleats can be seen on the sleeve. The shape of the arm is visible through the clothing.



The eunuch is looking after his master's needs. He probably holds a towel or scarf in his right hand. His left hand rests over the right arm.

### Lower body parts



*On the left:* the lower leg of the weapon bearer with part of the straight trousers of Median dress and an ankle-length shoe with a diagonal strap fastened at the top of the foot with a decorated floral 'button' (Rosette?). In the red shapes.

*On the right:* The lower leg of the eunuch with part of the flowing Persian robe. The shape of shoe is similar to that of the weapon bearer, but three straps around the foot are fastened with three 'buttons' in the red shapes.



*Messenger in front of the king.* Two large incense burners are seen in front and somewhat to the side of the human figure. The latter wears a 'Median costume' and a *bashlyk* on his head (cf. Fig. 5.13).







**Fig. 5.13 Messenger and two incense burners**

His body is bent forward in an attitude of respect (cf. Fig. 5.13). In the left hand he holds a short staff. The lower arm is held at a small angle (Calmeyer, 1994:147). He is probably in the process of requesting permission for the audience of the subject peoples to start.

His right hand is cupped and slightly outstretched and held against his lips. This could have been a greeting gesture or a sign of respect. The fabric pleats are visible on his arms. An ornate earring is visible. The essential facial features - eyes, nose and mouth are finely carved, but there is no facial expression. It is uncertain what is represented by the small structure descending over the beard from the corner of the mouth.

So far, all these figures discussed above appear under a baldachin. Outside the poles supporting the baldachin there are two figures on each side (cf. Table 5.7).

**Table 5.7 Detailed analytical reading of the figures just outside the poles of the baldachin**

	Left side	Right side
<b>Bodyguards</b>	 <p>Two royal guards wear similar dress: a wide fillet on the head; Persian dress, and three shoe straps over the feet. Both held a spear with both hands. The spears rest on the forward foot.</p>	 <p>Two royal guards wear similar dress: a wide fillet on the head; Persian dress and three shoe straps over the feet. The guard at the back holds a spear with both hands, while the guard in the front carries a pail.</p>
<b>Heads</b>	 <p>They wear a fairly wide fillet on their heads. A single row of curls appears on the forehead. The short beard and hairdo consist of seven rows of curls. An earring is visible in the ear. The essential features - eyes, nose, and mouth were finely carved but there is no facial expression except for the eyes. They appear as if they were alive staring at something.</p>	 <p>They wear a fairly wide fillet on their heads. A single row of curls appears on the forehead. The short beard and hairdo consist of seven rows of curls. A different kind of earring is visible in the ear. The essential features - eyes, nose, and mouth were finely carved but not identical. The nose of the figure at the back is slightly hooked. The cheek of the figure in front was rendered in such a way that there is a glimpse of a smile on the face. The eyes appear as if they were alive staring at something.</p>



**Middle torso**

The two elite bodyguards each hold a spear with both hands. The arm is visible through the material of the garment.



One of the guards, on the right-hand side, carries a metallic pail in his left hand. The pail probably contained coals to keep the incense burners active.<sup>73</sup> The right hand is folded over the left hand.

According to Root (1979:236), the original panel may be treated as a sculptural unit in its own right, but one must keep in mind that it is also linked compositionally to the adjacent Lion-and-Bull motif in the flanking triangles and the reliefs in Wings A and B. Collectively all these reliefs form a meaningful unit (cf. Fig. 4.1).

The lion - bull motif appears in the sloping triangles flanking the Audience Scene on both sides (cf. 4.3.1.4). This motif, as well as the palmettes and cypress trees, completed the images on Panel C. They also provided an undeniable symmetry around the Audience Scene.

The combination of animals and plants in the triangles, flanking the Audience Scene with the human figures, also formed a meaningful unit.

*Multiple artists* (cf. 4.1.2). If one looks at the extent of the 90 m long *Apadana Relief*, it seems impossible that it was done by a single artist. In the vast Achaemenid Empire, there were many artists with specific skills for specific tasks. The ruler and his architects had the privilege to select specific artists for specific tasks that could be summoned to execute the plans for the reliefs. These selected artists had to adhere to their instructions and therefore there was little room for artistic freedom. An example of a bit of artistic freedom has been identified (cf. Fig.

<sup>73</sup> Aromatic vapours were slowly released from the burning incense in the two burners (Iran Bastan Museum).

4.14.1. If there had been no specific instructions, one can imagine the chaos that would have been created because such a vast area had to be decorated.

*Knowledge of themes through literary sources.* Due to the few written Achaemenid sources and low literacy rate at that time, one had to rely on the available visual material to impart the information.

The only primary written sources left by the Achaemenids were the royal inscriptions and administrative records in the form of the *Fortification tablets*. Some of these royal inscriptions sang the praises of the king that could have contributed to the central position of the monarch in the Audience Scenes. Lists of subject peoples also appeared in some royal inscriptions. These lists reflected the vastness of the empire and contributed to the inclusion of different groups in the rendering of the processions of tribute bearers in the *Apadana Reliefs* (cf. Chapters Five to Eight).

Secondary sources, like the accounts by Greek historians, were biased and written from a Greek perspective. Certain details were absent like the fact that Persepolis was never mentioned by Herodotus.

The reliefs can be regarded as a history of types and symbols. The reliefs illustrated a certain epoch but there is no consensus among scholars about the message contained in these reliefs (cf. 3.5).

Symbolism was the universal and natural way of thinking in the ancient Near East. Symbols abound in the *Apadana Reliefs* e.g., crenulations, the winged disc, baldachin, lions, rosettes, trees, and clothing. Just about every depiction had a symbolic meaning and also acted as some kind of decoration. Perhaps one can call it ‘decorative symbolism’.

The motifs and their symbolism were discussed in the previous chapter (cf. 4.3.1).

*Decorations. Feasibility for certain decorations for a specific location.* By the time the *Apadana Reliefs* were carved, the Achaemenid Empire was a cosmopolitan entity absorbing foreign elements of either composition or decoration (Herzfeld, 1941:247). The different influences from different cultures were visible in the architectural decorations. Table 5.8 gives an idea of some of the influences.

**Table 5.8 Some influences on architectural decorations (From Roaf, 2003-2005:407)**

Origin	Influence
<b>Egypt</b>	Floral elements on column capitals.
<b>Assyria</b>	Motifs on the reliefs of the façade staircases and door jambs. Creatures (animal and human) forming double protomes.
<b>Greece</b>	Double volute capitals. Stoneworking techniques.

As *architectural decorations*, the *Apadana Reliefs* were very successful. The sculptures served a double purpose: they decorated and explained the context. Many people, therefore, received information via non-textual media – in this case, carved images (Strawn, 2008:131). One can also regard the reliefs in Persepolis as **cultural decorations** (Bryce, 2009:540).

For the purpose of this study, the emphasis will be on the reliefs of the Apadana as architectural decorations within the context in which they were created. One should not view the reliefs individually but must see them as parts of a central idea – **the power of the monarch**.

The Audience Scene in the central position was the focus point. To further stress this important position, the symbol of a ‘god’ appeared above the head of the king.

The reliefs in Wing A will display not only might but also peace and harmony

In Chapters Six to Eight, this display of might will be further enhanced by the representation of the twenty-three groups of tribute bearers in Wing B.

*How and why are decorations added to motifs and scenes?*

Motifs and scenes formed part of the architectural decorations in the *Apadana Reliefs*. These decorations could also be enhanced by adding other decorations like paint (colour) to them<sup>74</sup> (cf. Fig. 4.5). This could accentuate certain parts of the decoration. In this way, the focus of the viewer would have been directed to the important representations that would aid the analysis process. Once this process was completed, the meaning of the objects (reliefs) should have become clear to the interpreter (viewer).

The resultant visual experience of the viewers in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE must have been completely different to that of the viewers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE. The context in which the motifs and scenes were created was familiar to the viewers of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Their

<sup>74</sup> The extent of this study is limited and only one example, namely paint, will be discussed.

experience was further enhanced by bright colours that were applied to the reliefs. An interpreter in the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE has to rely on damaged and eroded images to a great extent. The discovery of more and more traces of paint creates an imaginary experience for the viewer of the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE and will lead to a better understanding of the original representations.

*Analysis of overall decoration. Sitz im Leben.* Fortunately, the archaeological finds provide the researcher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE with primary sources. In Persepolis, the preserved reliefs of the eastern façade of the Apadana, as well as the preserved reliefs on the door jambs of the 100 Column Hall, provide primary sources for the researcher. The position of the ruling monarch and his successor at the centre of the eastern façade, as well as their larger size, the figures behind and those in front of them, the lion and bull scenes, and the extensive Wing A, all contribute to illustrate the supremacy of the ruler over a vast empire consisting of a diverse population with different cultures and from different geographical parts of the empire. This is reiterated in the variety of gifts to be presented to the ruling monarch in Wing B.

The overall impression of the reliefs reflected peace and harmony but at the same time, the weapons some of the figures carry reflect the preparedness for conflict.

### (c) LEVEL 3

*Meaning of an image in its historic context, the intrinsic meaning of its context, and the understanding of meaning through culturally conditioned principles.*

The meaning of the subject is made possible by incorporating both descriptions and interpreting the pictorial representations in Levels 1 and 2.

The history of the Achaemenids spanned more than two centuries. During that time, and especially during the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes, many buildings were erected. They were decorated with reliefs that depicted human beings and different animals and plants - mostly in the form of reliefs. Because the empire stretched from Egypt to the Indus River, many influences of different cultural groups were reflected in the artistic decorations.

The meagre amount of textual evidence does not really contribute to the meaning of the images. It does, however, give an idea of the importance of the monarch and the extent of his empire. The researcher is mostly dependent on the visual images. One can see the relationship as an inter-visibility between the viewer and the visual image.

In the Achaemenid visual world, just about everything had a symbolic meaning e.g., the motifs discussed in Chapter Four all had symbolic meanings. Were the visitors familiar with the

symbolism and could they interpret it as part of their cultural and social history? On the political front, the reliefs only display peaceful scenes. Conflict, revolts, and wars were at times a reality during the Achaemenid reign, but all the spears carried by the ‘Immortals’ and the weapons carried by the king’s weapon bearer paint a picture of temporary peace.

All the images, when seen in a historic context, reflect the fact that they were there at a specific time and place in order to assist the interpreter to discover their meaning.

### 5.3 RELIEFS ON THE NORTH WING A OF THE EASTERN FAÇADE

#### 5.3.1 Total reading of the three registers of Wing A

Mainly a total reading of Wing A will be done in the current chapter. Wing B will be discussed in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, using total as well as analytical reading.

The figures in the reliefs of Wing A form parallel rows (registers) that are horizontally divided by twelve-petalled rosette borders. All these figures are drawn up to a halt behind the Audience Scene and they are arranged in a certain formation (Root, 1979:240; cf. Figs. 5.14.1 & 5.14.2).

*The ‘Immortals’* (Imperial guard) were represented with monotonous repetition. Each one is holding a lance with both hands. The lance ends in a knob and rests on the right foot. They are dressed in ‘Persian’ robes (court dress). From the top to the bottom register, the number of the ‘Immortal’ figures decline: from 43 to 28 to 21 (Shahbazi, 2011:107) because the surface area slopes, and they had to fit into a certain space.



**Fig. 5.14.1 Three registers of guards (the ‘Immortals’) on Wing A of the eastern Apadana staircase closest to the Audience Scene**

*Procession of nobles.* Grooms, horses, and horse-drawn chariots fill the top register. Nobles are depicted on the middle and bottom registers.





**Fig. 5.14.2 Three registers behind the guards (Shahbazi, 2011:111)**



**1                      2                      3                      4**

**Fig. 5.14.3 Four relaxed nobles from the middle register**

The nobles, following the ‘Immortals’ in the middle and bottom registers, are depicted in relaxed postures. Alternately, they are wearing ‘Persian’ or ‘Median’ dress. This dress is not indicative of nationality, but of position and function. The Persians could be seen as court officials while the Medes represent military officials carrying an *akinakes* and a *gorytos* (Shahbazi 2011:114; Fig. 5.14.3). A frontal view is depicted by Numbers 1-3 and their heads are turned sideways, while the body of Number 4 is depicted laterally. Numbers 1-3 each wear a torque around their necks (probably Number 4 as well?). The right hand of Number 1 holds the left hand of the noble in front of him, while his left hand is on the right-hand shoulder of

Number 2. At the same time, the right hand of Number 3 is resting on the left shoulder of Number 2. It seems as if they were talking to one another. Numbers 3 and 4 are not part of the conversation. Numbers 1 and 4 each carry a *gorytos* tied around their waists. Number 2 has his hand on a weapon (an *akinakes*?). Numbers 2-4 are each carrying a single flower. It is not clear whether the images in Fig. 5.14.3 are representatives of the highest dignitaries in the empire or were they there for the Nowruz celebrations.

*Top register with royal grooms, staff bearers, and charioteers.* Directly behind the ‘Immortals’ in the top register, an usher in ‘Median’ dress is depicted. He is followed by four grooms alternating in ‘Median’ and ‘Persian’ dress and carrying a whip in one hand and a highly decorated rug or saddle cloth over his arm (Shahbazi, 2011:110; cf. Fig. 5.11.1).



**Fig. 5.15.1** Part of the last portion of the top register with two grooms and two charioteers (Shahbazi, 2011:111)



**Fig. 5.15.2** Weathered charioteer in the upper register as seen in 2014



**Fig. 5.15.3** Plaster cast of a charioteer in the upper register (Shahbazi, 2011:112)

The pins on the wheels of chariots are the only known depictions of female figures. Each chariot has a small open body that is richly decorated. The body of the chariot rests on an axil and is drawn by two stallions and driven by a charioteer dressed in Persian attire. The stallions are richly decorated in the same way as the stallions led by the three grooms (cf. Figs. 5.15.2 & 5.15.3).

**Table 5.9 Summary of the different groups illustrated on Wing A of the Apadana**

Register	Images closest to the Audience Scene	Images behind the ‘Immortals’
<b>Bottom</b>	‘Immortals’ (Guards).	Nobles.
<b>Middle</b>	‘Immortals’ (Guards).	Nobles.
<b>Top</b>	‘Immortals’ (Guards).	Royal grooms. Horses and horse-drawn chariots.

From Table 5.9, it is clear that the ‘Immortals’ was the only group occupying space in all three registers. Is this a sign of their importance? The nobles occupied space in the bottom and middle registers, while the remaining space on the top register was filled with grooms, horses, and chariots.

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

Different aspects pertaining to the images were discussed with the purpose of finding the meaning of the created images on the Apadana.

Certain methods had to be used to realise the meaning of the reliefs. The methods by Panofsky (1955) and Keel (1992) were combined. By comparing the original central panel with other audience scenes, the influence of Assyrian art on the classic Achaemenid art was clear.

The central position of the king in royal attire, whether standing or seated, and in some cases on a dais and depicted larger than the courtiers, guards, and other human images, symbolised the importance and power of the monarch.

Using a comparative method, in tabular form, the influence of Assyrian art on classic Achaemenid art became evident. This influence resulted in a unique fusion of ideas that resulted in a fresh approach in architecture and art, telling their own story with visual images as the main source of information. The meaning of the reliefs started to emerge. By incorporating the descriptions and also interpreting the pictorial representations in panels A and C, using the combined Panofsky/Keel method. The king, at the centre of the Audience Scene (cf. Fig. 5.7.1), played an important pivotal role with guards, nobles and chariots approaching from one side and twenty-three delegations of subject peoples from the other. The importance of the power of the king, as ruler over such a vast empire, was reflected in these reliefs and will be explored further in this study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM GROUPS IN THE APADANA RELIEFS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The viewing of the *Apadana Reliefs* of the twenty-three delegations who were subject peoples of the Persian Empire, at a certain point in its history, is an overwhelming experience. The groups form part of a procession. Other processions in the ancient Near East acted as examples for the processions depicted in the *Apadana Reliefs* in Persepolis. The immediate question that comes to mind is: who were these people? This question leads to a problem of identification. One should also clarify whether the delegates were presenting the king with gifts and/or tributes.

Certain problems arise when confronted with the identification process of the different groups. For more than a century, the identification of the reliefs of the delegations, depicted on the Apadana stairways in Persepolis, posed a problem to scholars (Gropp, 2009:283). The following questions formed part of scholarly research into the identification of the depicted groups:

- (i) Were the subject peoples in the reliefs all part of the empire at the time the reliefs were planned and executed?
- (ii) Did the planners make use of the lists of subject people mentioned in the different Royal inscriptions?
- (iii) Did Xerxes just take over where Darius left off and completed the relief project?
- (iv) What were the identification criteria used by modern scholars?
- (v) Why did a Persian and a Mede alternate in the role as usher for each delegation?

Answers to these questions must be seen in their historical context.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to find the reason(s) for the incongruities in the identification of eleven groups seen as the Problem Groups in this study. The combined Panofsky/Keel method, as well as a comparative approach, will be used (cf. 1.7).



## 6.2 TAXES, TRIBUTE, AND GIFTS

It is necessary to establish what is meant by each of these concepts (cf. Klingkott, Kubisch & Müller-Wollermann, 2007). ‘Tax’ can be seen as a compulsory contribution that had to be paid according to an amount decided on by the ruler. ‘Tribute’ can be regarded as the intention of the giver to show gratitude, respect, or admiration towards the governing powers. It could have been monetary and/or not (Briant, 2002:403; Bär, 2007:231). At times, it is difficult to distinguish between tax and tribute. A ‘gift’ is something given willingly to someone without payment. It can therefore be incorporated into ‘tribute’.

### 6.2.1 Taxes

The fiscal state of the Achaemenids was redefined by Darius I. He had to count on a regular income in order to meet the requirements for the expenditure of his building projects at Susa and Persepolis, as well as the replenishment of the storehouses and the state coffers (Root, 1979:229). This resulted in a complicated fiscal picture. The annual tax was probably not brought as gifts (tribute) to the New Year’s Festival at Persepolis (Walser, 1966:23).

The restructuring of this fiscal landscape by Darius I resulted in two types of tax: **royal tax** and **satrapal tax** (Briant, 2002:403). Royal tax was paid by subject nations in monetary form and precious raw material like gold, silver, and copper if they were present in the area. Satrapal tax was paid to the satrap himself in order to run his satrap efficiently. Bär (2007:231) also distinguishes between different kinds of tribute which shows the similarities of Briant’s viewpoint.

According to Klinkott (2007:263), there were three kinds of taxes:

- (i) General, regular, compulsory tax that could be in monetary form (cf. Royal tax above) but could also be in the form of the tenth of the products required for tax purposes.
- (ii) Tribute that served a different purpose and was not compulsory (Klinkott, 2007:276). Koch (1992) does not distinguish between tax and tribute.
- (iii) Tax that provided for the needs of the king and was directly channelled to the king.

Numbers (i) and (iii) correspond with Briant’s royal tax.

Persians, living in Persia, were exempted from tax but for those non-resident Persians, tax was compulsory (Klinkott, 2007:271).



### 6.2.2 Tribute and gifts

Gift-bringing was a tradition in the ancient Orient (cf. Pfälzner 2007; Podany 2010) and probably served as a predecessor for the presentation of the gifts or tribute in the Achaemenid Period. Root (1979:229) divides gifts into non-symbolic and symbolic (an *encomium* where the monarch was praised through the type of gift presented by individuals).

Tribute and gifts each constituted a partial and complementary element, and it is sometimes difficult to draw the line between the two. It is, however, necessary to note that Root (1979:229) states that the type of ‘gift’ that was presented must have depended on the type of tribute they represented and, in some cases, had a dual purpose. For this reason, it was difficult to separate the two terms. Tribute could have the same components as tax, albeit without the monetary portion (Klinkott, 2007:272). The tribute presentation consisted of two different parts:

- (i) The king as receiver.
- (ii) The tribute or gift bearers in a procession of subject peoples on their way to present their tribute (Bär, 2007:232).

Each group in the procession was led by an usher. The different groups could be distinguished by using several criteria (cf. 6.4.1.2). Certain tributes were registered and stored in the Treasury at Persepolis (Klinkott, 2007:272-273; Bär 2007:248).

From the above, it is clear that there was a relationship between tributes and gifts. They did not function separately in a vastly more complex system, ‘each constituted a partial and complementary element’ (Briant 2002:397). Briant even goes so far as to say that gifts were assimilated into what is called tribute.

For the purpose of this study, the term ‘tribute’ will be used.

### 6.3 PROCESSIONS: EXAMPLES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Processions can be defined as the action of a group of people who are ‘proceeding’ in a formalised and orderly sequence (Filitz, 2020:264ff.). ‘A distinction can be made between two types of formal processions: those that take place irregularly and those that are held at regular intervals’ (Price & Merkt, 2006).

The Achaemenids were exposed to the iconographic development of a tableau representing the idea of ‘all lands’ bringing tribute to the monarch. These representations could take on the form of mosaics, paintings, or reliefs created by different cultures (Root, 1979:283). A brief overview, of a few examples, created by these cultures at different times will be discussed.

### 6.3.1 Royal standard of Ur

The panel of the Royal standard of Ur, made of wood, consisted of tiny figures in mother-of-pearl inlaid in bitumen against a mosaic of lapis-lazuli and red limestone (Collon, 1995:67). This is one of only two extant examples in Sumer (Walser 1966:250). It was discovered in a tomb in the Royal cemetery (c. 2600 BCE) and consists of double-sided panels that are known as 'War' and 'Peace'. For the purpose of this study, only the 'Peace' side will be used (cf. Figs. 6.1.1 & 6.1.2). The narratives are depicted in the form of tiny human figures. The trapezoidal panels show animal scenes at each end (Collon, 1995:67; Lloyd, 1971:8).

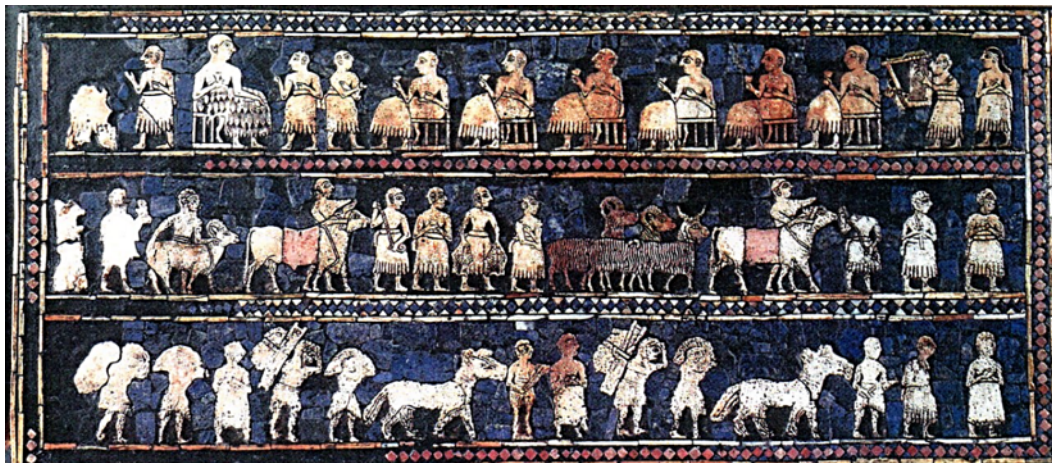


Fig. 6.1.1 The 'Peace' side of the Royal standard of Ur (Collon, 1995:67)

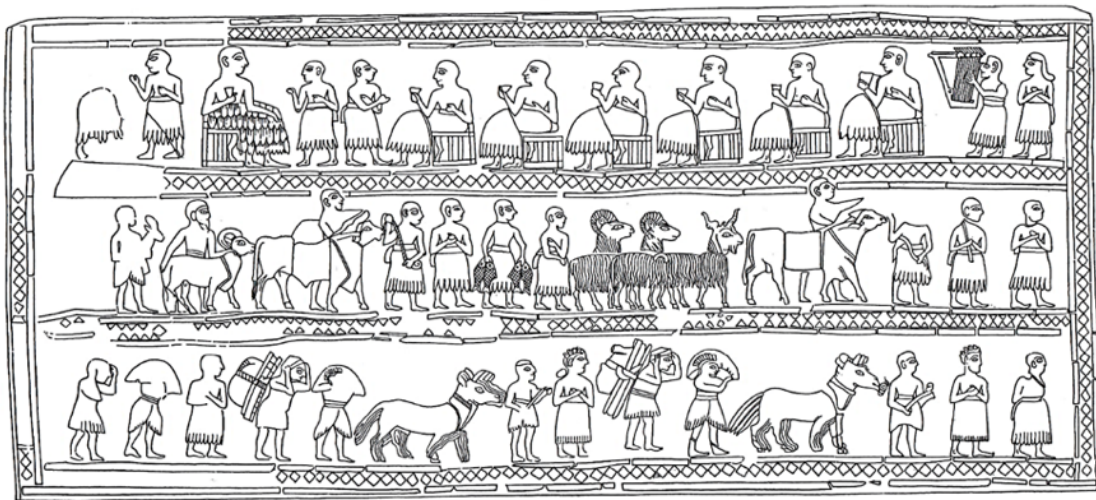


Fig. 6.1.2 A line drawing of the 'Peace' side of the Royal Standard of Ur (Walser, 1966:16)

The whole scene was displayed in three registers separated by a decoration. More than 2000 years ago, there was already a hierarchal system in artistic presentations. The seated figure, second from the left in the top register, is depicted taller than the rest with his head almost penetrating the border. He also wears a different garment. This figure probably represents the king.



The figures in the whole procession were moving towards the king. They were carrying ‘goods’ - either in their hands or on their backs. No weapons were present. Apart from the king, two intermingling groups of people could be distinguished: those with ankle-length robes - either seated or moving and some figures with knee-length attire. The latter carried burdens on their heads or their backs. Could their burdens be seen as booty? (cf. lower register in Fig. 6.1.2). This leaves the field wide open for speculation as to the function of all the animals in the procession, especially the four fish at the centre of the middle register! Were these animals tribute or booty? There is no textual evidence to substantiate either of the two perspectives.


The proportions of animal to man were also acceptable, except for the ‘goats’ in the centre of the middle register where the animals were almost the same size as the humans.

### 6.3.2 Tomb paintings in Egypt

A group of painted tombs, to which the one of the vizier, Rekhmire,<sup>75</sup> belonged, was built and decorated for high officials. In this example of a painting with tribute bearers in an Egyptian tomb, the international character of the New Kingdom early in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1549/50 -1292 BCE) is reflected (Matthiae, 1999:260; cf. Fig. 6.2).



**Fig. 6.2 Depiction of foreign emissaries in the tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes (Matthiae, 1999:260)**

<sup>75</sup> Rekhmire (‘wise like Ra’)  was a court official of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II (c. 1500-1400 BCE).

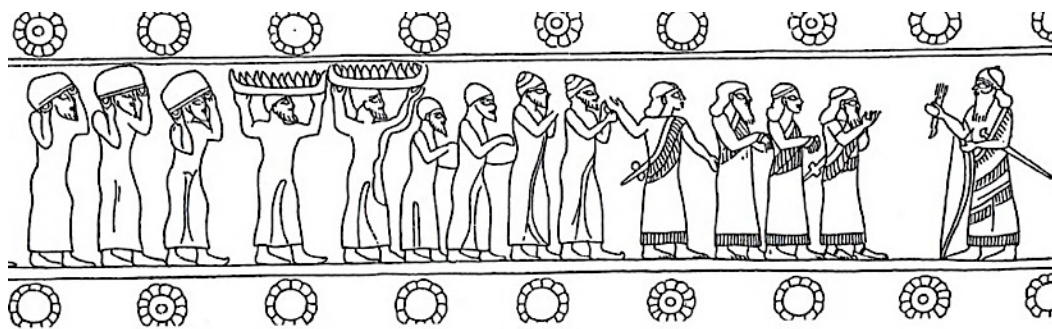
The painting was divided into four registers. In each register, more than one group is depicted. Even with the present quality of the paintings, the variety of groups is quite clear. Inscriptions appear above the heads of the human figures. One can differentiate between the physical appearance of the figures, their dress, and the goods they bring. Not all the gifts of these people are characteristic of their homeland, while others are. In the row, marked A, a few African animals are depicted e.g., a giraffe, baboon, and lion. One figure in this register also carries a large elephant tusk. This group might be linked to Nubia.

### 6.3.3 Neo-Assyrian Period

#### 6.3.3.1 *The reign of Ashurnaisirpal II (883-859 BCE) and Shalmaneser III (859-824 BCE)*

The bronze bands on the Balawat gates dating to the reign of Ashurnaisirpal II (883-850 BCE) and Shalmaneser III (859-824 BCE) also depicted ‘War’ and ‘Peace’ scenes.

#### (a) The gates of Balawat



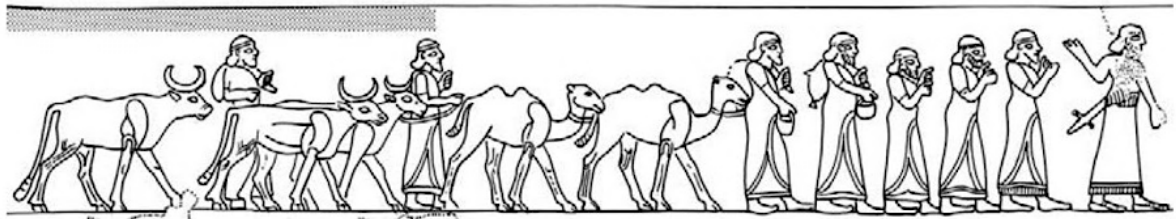
**Fig. 6.3.1 Part of the ‘Peace’ tribute procession on one of the Balawat Bronze Gates from Shalmaneser III (Walser, 1966:16)**

In Fig. 6.3.1, part of the ‘Peace motif’ was depicted in bronze bands, in two registers, that adorned the enormous wooden gates. The bronze bands were hammered from behind. The different scenes were framed in rosette bands. The wooden elements decomposed and some of the metal strips were damaged. The wood was replaced and some of the damaged bronze bands contain electrotype copies of the original bands. The tribute from Tyre and Sidon included bronze cauldrons (cf. three left figures in Fig. 6.3.1)

In eight of the twenty-three registers, captions identified the city or region of origin of the tribute bearers (Schachner, 2007:175). Were they actually handing over ‘booty’ to the Assyrian king and/or was it regarded as tribute? Regardless, it still symbolised the acceptance of Assyrian sovereignty. At the same time, the non-Assyrians were visually granted their existence.

(b) Tribute procession from *Gilzanu*

Fig. 6.3.2 represents only part of the tribute procession from *Gilzanu*. The usher leading this group can be distinguished by the beckoning hand, wearing a different garment and a sword on his left-hand side. Three other figures, with their hands clasped in fists, follow the usher.



**Fig. 6.3.2 A section of the tribute procession from Gilzanu (VIIb) (Schachner, 2007:178)**

The commencement of the tribute bearers only starts with the fourth figure. This figure and the one that follows carry similar ware – a piece of textile with tassels on the corners over the left shoulder (cf. Fig. 6.3.3) and a small pail in the right hand.



**Fig. 6.3.3 Two figures with a pail each and textile over the shoulder in one. The other one leading a camel**

The core of this procession was unequivocally the different kinds of animals. In Fig.6.3.2, two double-humped Bactrian camels<sup>76</sup> are led on a rope (cf. Fig.7.5 where similar camels are led by figures in the Parthian, Arachosian, and Arian delegations at Persepolis). Only one of the oxen in Fig. 6.3.2 are led by a rope. The other two wander along on their own.

<sup>76</sup> Double humped camels were not present in Mesopotamia in the early first millennium BCE (Schachner, 2007:182).



### 6.3.3.2 Reign of Sargon II (722-705 BCE): Khorsabad reliefs (cf. Table 5.2).

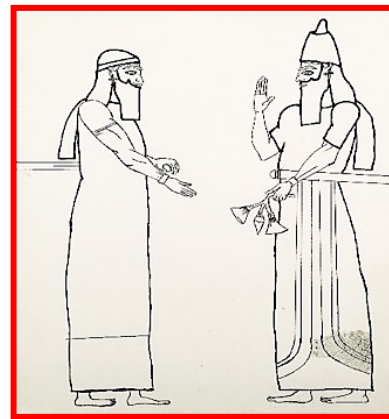
During the reign of Sargon II, ceremonial tribute processions were used extensively (Root, 1979:257). Some of these processions, from his palace at Khorsabad, are illustrated in the Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago (cf. Fig. 6.4.1).



**Fig. 6.4.1 King Sargon receiving a procession of courtiers followed by tribute bearers and two stallions (from a mural on the adjacent wall of the courtyard of King Sargon's palace) (OIM, Chicago)**



**Fig. 6.4.2 King Sargon II receiving his son Sennacherib (OIM, Chicago)**



**Fig. 6.4.3 Line drawing of King Sargon and his successor Sennacherib (From Fig. 6.4.1; Drawing by N.L. Swart)**

The king was always in a standing position and raising his hand in greeting. He is recognised by his apparel and the lotus flower he is holding in his left hand. It seems as if the right arm and hand of the crown prince are held out in supplication (cf. Figs. 6.4.2 & 6.4.3).



**Fig. 6.4.4 Detail of foreign tribute bearers following a beckoning courtier (From Fig. 6.4.1)**

The courtier, leading the tribute bearers, uses the front part of his arm as well as his hand to summon the tribute bearers (cf. Fig. 6.4.4).

Only one theme was depicted in each of the five separate rooms. Because space was limited in a room, it was never possible to increase the number of tribute bearers (Walser, 1966:14-15).

The processions that were analysed in 6.3 leave the researcher with more questions than answers. For the purpose of this study, certain aspects of these depictions can be used and applied as examples for the processions in Persepolis:

- (i) The definite registers were separated from one another by decorations or inscriptions. In the bronze plates on the gates of Balawat, rosettes are used to separate the registers (cf. Fig. 4.17.1).
- (ii) Definite movement was implied by the figures in the procession.
- (iii) The figure of the king was depicted larger than the other figures in the procession.

#### 6.4 PROCESSIONS: PERSEPOLIS APADANA

In the processions on the Apadana staircases, different delegations of the subject people of the empire, with tributes, moved forward towards the king.

##### 6.4.1 Apadana staircase on eastern façade: Wing B

The inner ascending staircase with the tribute bearers in this wing was peaceful (cf. Wing A, Table 5.1 with guards and nobles). In contrast to the Neo-Assyrian reliefs where there were usually war and peace scenes, there were no war scenes in any of the *Apadana Reliefs* at Persepolis – pax Persica. Some remaining column parts of the Apadana can be seen in Fig. 6.5.



**Fig. 6.5** Tribute bearers on Wing B adorning one retaining wall of the terrace  
(Shahbazi, 2011:120)

The three registers of Wing B were framed in rosette bands. Within each register, the different cultural groups were separated from each other by a cypress tree (cf. 4.3.1.5(a)). All the figures were moving towards the centre and each group was led by an usher – a Persian and a Median alternately (Curtis & Tallis, 2005:65). On viewing Wing B, it looked like a monotonous repetition (Walser, 1966:23). Close-up viewing tells a different story, and the detail of the reliefs became apparent as well as the similarities and differences.

The identification of the twenty-three groups has posed a problem for more than a century (Gropp, 2009:283). The identification of these groups, by nine scholars, was used in the present study. Even to this day, scholars seem to be in agreement about the identity of twelve of these groups – I, III, V, IX, X, XI, XIV, XVIII, XX, XXII, and XXIII (cf. Table 6.1). For the remaining eleven groups - II, IV, VI, VII, VIII, XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XIX, and XXI (cf. Table 6.2), there is no consensus among the researchers and the solving of the identification of the Problem Groups is an ongoing process (Walser, 1966:25) The reason(s) for the incongruities is not clear.

- (i) Were the subject peoples all part of the empire at the time the reliefs were planned and executed?
- (ii) Did the planners, Darius I and his advisors, make use of lists of subject peoples in the Royal inscriptions?
- (iii) Did they perhaps turn to the symbolic figures represented by the nations supporting the throne in some of the door jambs e.g., in the 100 Column Hall at Persepolis? (Barnett, 1957:65).
- (iv) Why did a Persian and a Mede<sup>77</sup> alternate in the role as usher for each delegation? What criteria were used during their identification process?

In the present study, an iconographic analysis will be done in an attempt to find some answers to the identification of the Problem Groups (where no consensus occurs on the identity of certain groups). Table 6.1 shows the incongruities in the identification of the different groups of tribute bearers. These groups are shaded in different colours to distinguish them from the groups where there is consensus on their identification where no shading was applied. Table 6.1 was constructed from cited literature by the current researcher and was compared with the table in Gropp (2009:293). In Table 6.2, the Problem Groups are indicated with specific colours for the same group.

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<sup>77</sup> Cyrus gave the Medes a share in government after his victory over Astyages (Gropp, 2009:283).

Table 6.1 Identification of the different groups of gift bearers of the Apadana Reliefs

	Schmidt 1953	Barnett 1957	Walser 1966	Herzfeld 1968	Wilber 1969	Dandamaev et al. 1994	Koch 2001	Wieshöfer 2009	Shabazi 2011
I	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes	Medes
II	Susian	Elamite	Elamite	Elamite	Susian	Elamite	Elamite	Elamite	Susian
III	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians	Armenians
IV	Aryans	Aryans (Haraiva)	Aryans or Arachosians	Arachosians	Aryans	Aryans	Parthians	Aryans	Aryans
V	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians	Babylonians
VI	Syrians	Lydians	Syrians	Syrians	Lydians	Lydians	Lydians	Syrians	Lydians
VII	Arachosians	Arachosians	Arachosians or Aryans	Aryans (Haraiva)	Arachosians	Arachosians	Aryans	Arachosians	Arachosians
VIII	Cilicians	Sogdians	Cilicians	Cilicians	Sogdians	Sogdians	Syrians	Cilicians	Assyrians
IX	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia	Cappadocia
X	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians	Egyptians
XI	Pointed-hat Schythians <i>Saka tigra- xauda</i>	Pointed-hat Schythians <i>Saka tigra- xauda</i>	Schythians		Pointed-hat Schythians <i>Saka tigra- xauda</i>	Pointed-hat Schythians <i>Saka tigra- xauda</i>	Schythians	Schythians	Pointed-hat Schythians <i>Saka tigra- xauda</i>
XII	Ionians	Ionians	Lydian	Lydian	Ionians	Ionians	Ionians	Lydian	Ionians
XIII	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Bactrians	Parthians	Bactrians







**Table 6.2 The eleven Problem Groups as indicated by different colours to show the discrepancies and distribution within different groups**

	Schmidt 1953	Barnett 1957	Walser 1966	Herzfeld 1968	Wilber 1969	Danda- maev et al. 1994	Koch 2001	Wiese- höfer 2009	Shahbazi 2011
II	Susian	Elamite	Elamite	Elamite	Susian	Elamite	Elamite	Elamite	Susian
IV	Aryans	Aryans (Haraiwa)	Aryans or	Arachocians	Aryans	Aryans	Parthians	Aryans	Aryans
			Arachocians						
VI	Syrians	Lydians	Syrians	Syrians	Lydians	Lydians	Lydians	Syrians	Lydians
VII	Arachocians	Arachocians	Arachocians	Aryans (Haraiwa)	Arachocians	Arachocians	Aryans	Arachocians	Arachocians
			or Aryans					or Aryans	
VIII	Cilicians	Sogdians	Cilicians	Cilicians	Sogdians	Sogdians	Syrians	Cilicians	Assyrian
XII	Ionians	Ionians	Lydians	Lydians	Ionians	Ionians	Ionians	Lydians	Ionians
XIII	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Parthians	Bactrians	Parthians	Bactrians
XV	Bactrians	Bactrians	Bactrians	Bactrians	Bactrians	Bactrians	Drangia- mians/ Arachosians	Bactrians	Parthians
XVII	Sogdians	Choramians	Sogdians	Sogdians	Choramians	Choramians	Sogdians	Sogdians	Saka Hauma- varga
							Choramians		
XIX	Skudrians?	Skudrians	Skudrians	Saka Paradrya	Skudrian	Thracian	Thracians	Thracian	Saka Paradrya
			Thracians						
XXI	Drangia- mians	Drangia- mians	Median tribe	Akau-faka. Tribe of the Saka	Drangia- mians	Drangia- mians	Carians	Median tribe	Zarangians

In Table 6.2, the distribution of the Problem Groups is quite clear. It also indicates the contradiction amongst scholars in the identification of the Problem Groups – II, IV, VI, VII, VIII, XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XIX, and XXI.

Sometimes, a certain delegation will appear in more than one group e.g., Arachocians (IV and VII), Aryans (IV and VII), Parthians (IV and XIII), Syrians (VI and VIII), Sogdians (VIII and XVII), Lydians (VI and XII), and Bactrians (XIII and XV).

The different Problem Groups, as indicated in Table 6.2, were spread out over a large area of the Achaemenid Empire. Map 6.1 illustrates their geographical distribution and will be used in the analyses of the Problem Groups (underlined in red) as one of the criteria. This will give an indication whether the different Problem Groups lived in the same geographical vicinity or



- (i) Lists on the Darius statue at Susa.
- (ii) The Foundation inscriptions found at Persepolis.
- (iii) The tomb of Darius at Naqsh-i-Rustam.

Briant (2002:173) provides comparative lists of different inscription lists, of mainly Darius I and Xerxes, in a tabular form. This, in turn, results in another problem. The groups named in the inscription lists ‘do not tally with each other either in sequence or content’ (Barnett, 1957:66). The following example from Walser (1966:75) illustrates the same content but in a different sequence. The groups are indicated by the Roman numerals.

**Table 6.3 The distribution of the Drangians, Aryans, and Arachosians in different sequences in different inscriptions (Walser, 1966:75)**

DB (Darius – Bisitun)		DPe (Darius – Persepolis)		DNa (Darius – Naqsh-i - Rustam)		XPh (Xerxes – Persepolis)	
XIV	Drangiana	XIV	Drangiana	V	Aryan	III	Arachosia
XV	Aryan	XV	Aryan	IX	Drangiana	V	Drangiana
XXII	Arachosia	XX	Arachosia	X	Arachosia	VII	Aryan

Sometimes the figures in the reliefs of the Apadana do not appear on a specific inscription lists. The reason for this could be that some of the subject peoples of the empire were not part of the empire at the time the inscription was created.

The history and geographical distribution will also place the entirety of the Problem Groups in context for the problem-solving attempt in this study. Other criteria, like the clothing worn by the subject peoples and the tribute they brought, will also be used to try and find a solution to the identification problem (cf. 6.4.1.2).

#### 6.4.2 Analysis of Group II: Elamites and Susians

Before the analysis of Group II, it is necessary to have a brief look at the history and geographical locations of Elam and Susiana.

##### 6.4.2.1 Geographical locations

There is a difference of opinion among scholars concerning the geographical grouping of the tribute/gift bearers. According to Barnett (1957:72), there is a recognisable geographical pattern if the *Apadana Reliefs* are read horizontally and not vertically. He illustrates this by lists of the twenty-three delegations read vertically and horizontally (Barnett, 1957:73). This is debatable because when reading the reliefs in a *vertical* way, a certain geographical grouping

also becomes clear amongst some of the Problem Groups. In most cases, these groups are arranged in such a way that neighbouring groups are used in any one identification (Fig. 6.6). It is also interesting to note that there are no groups with identification problems to the south.

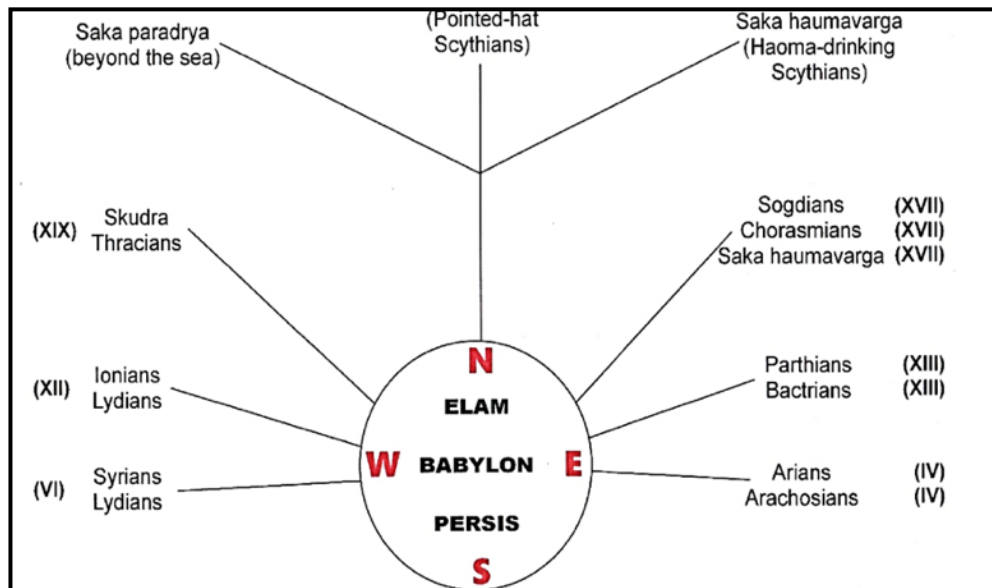


Fig. 6.6 The grouping of some of the Problem Groups when read in a vertical way (Derived from Map 6.1)

Elam was an ancient Near Eastern kingdom and was the eastern neighbours of Mesopotamia (Koch, 1992:306; cf. Map 6.2). 'Elam' is the Sumerian name for a country that stretched from across the Zagros Mountains to modern-day Khuzestan and to Fars (Bryce, 2009:219). This incorporated both the lowland plain of Elam and the highlands of Susiana that became part of the Achaemenid Empire (Bryce, 2009:219; Perrot, 2013:13). Their proximity to the Persian Gulf also enabled trade along seaways.



Map 6.2 Geographical location of Elam (from Map 6.1)

#### 6.4.2.2 Historical background

For a long time, scholars confused Elam (on the plains) with Susiana (on the foothills of the Zagros Mountains). Vallat (2012) divides the history of Elam into three different periods: Old Elamite (c. 2400-1600 BCE); Middle Elamite (c. 1500-1140 BCE); Neo-Elamite (1100-539 BCE).<sup>78</sup> The latter was further divided into two more Neo-Elamite periods preceding the Achaemenid Period (539-331 BCE).

Elam had a long and varied history that spanned over 2 000 years. During this time, the limits of Elam varied as neighbouring tribes were conquered and perhaps lost again. At one stage in their history, they were one of the most important powers in western Asia (Bryce, 2009:219). There were ongoing battles between Elam, Assyria, and Babylonia. The Elamite city of Chogha Zanbil<sup>79</sup> was centred around an impressive ziggurat that once functioned as a religious complex (cf. Figs. 6.7.1 & 6.7.2).

This gives scholars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century an idea of the religious customs of the Elamites (Carter, 2011). This complex also reflects the wealth of the people. Unfortunately, there are very little visible remains of the palaces outside the precinct of the ziggurat. In 644 BCE, after a battle with the Assyrians, the Elamites were devastated, weakened, and fragmented among different small kingdoms. The once-mighty Elamites were now ruling an ever-shrinking domain.



**Fig. 6.7.1 A model of the ziggurat surrounded by a square open courtyard (ITTO, 2021)**



**Fig. 6.7.2 One corner of the ziggurat at Chogha Zanbil and part of an altar in the left-hand corner**

The entire ziggurat should be regarded as a temple that was originally consecrated to Insusinak, one of the most important Elamite deities.

It was probably also a display of the power of the king. Undeniably, master builders were at work here (cf. Figs 6.7.3 & 6.7.4).

<sup>78</sup> It is difficult to find definite, fixed dates for the different periods in the history of Elam, therefore it is safer to use the abbreviation *c.*

<sup>79</sup> The city was founded by the Elamite king, Untas Napirisa (c. 1275-1240 BCE) (Carter 2011).

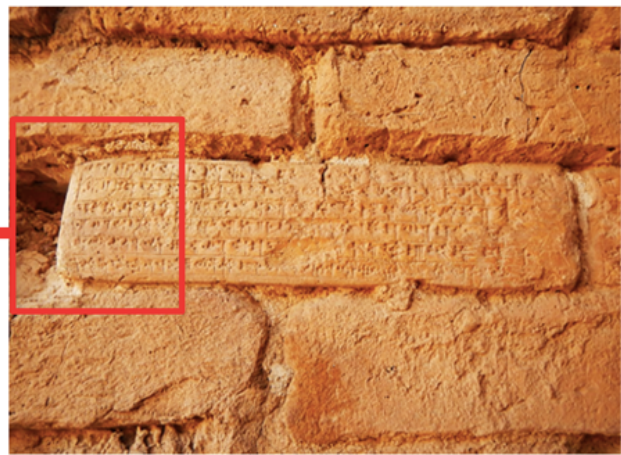




**Fig. 6.7.3 Altar in the open courtyard**



**Fig. 6.7.4 Drainage channel to allow for disposal of water and other liquids**



**Fig. 6.7.5 Inscribed mudbrick in the wall of the ziggurat**

Every eleventh row consisted of inscribed bricks dedicating the ziggurat to Insusinak (cf. Fig. 6.7.5).

The use of Elamite in the trilingual royal inscriptions bears witness to the importance of their language, as do their cultural heritage (Perrot, 2013:13). The spoken language, however, did not survive for too long. The Susians also had a long history in more or less the same area. The Middle Elamite Period was characterised by the ‘elamisation’ of Susiana (Vallat, 2012) and they became incorporated into the kingdom of Elam. Susa, the Susian capital, now became one of the Elamites’ royal capitals (Bryce, 2009:678).

During the Neo-Elamite III Period (646-539 BCE), the whole scene changed. Populations speaking Indo-Iranian languages migrated onto the Persian plateau. The Elamites were forced to relinquish ‘one area of their empire after another and to take refuge in Susiana which only then became conterminous with Elam’ (Vallat, 2012). Susiana now became known as Elam. The latter occupied the same area as the Susians and a definite distinction between the two

groups became almost impossible. The identification of this group seems to be the choice of the scholar working on the problem.

#### 6.4.2.3 Identification of Group II by different authors

Identifying the different groups in the Apadana procession is not easy due to the lack of applicable lists in the Royal inscriptions. The comparison of the groups on the *Apadana Reliefs* with the symbolic representations of different inscribed nations on the tomb reliefs should result in an objective identification technique (Barnett, 1957:65; Muscarella, 1969:282). Some classical writers called the Elamites Susians because of their connection with Susa. Thus, during the identification process, some scholars call this kingdom Elam, while others call it Susiana. They are depicted as one group of people although they constitute more than one cultural group.

It should be noted that the lists of scholars cited in Table 6.4 are limited.<sup>80</sup> However, it is apparent from this table that more scholars identify group II as Elamites than Susians.

**Table 6.4 Identification of Group II by different authors at different times**

Delegation	Date of identification	Scholar
Elamites	1957	Barnett
	1966	Walser
	1968	Herzfeld
	1994	Dandamaev et al.
	2001	Koch
	2009	Gropp; Wiesehöfer
Susians	1953	Schmidt
	1969	Wilber
	2011	Shahbazi

#### 6.4.2.4 Tribute bearers in Wing B

The procession will be illustrated in three parts (cf. Figs. 6.8.1, 6.8.2 & 6.8.3) where the different groups of tribute bearers are numbered and labelled.

<sup>80</sup> They are among the scholars cited in this study.

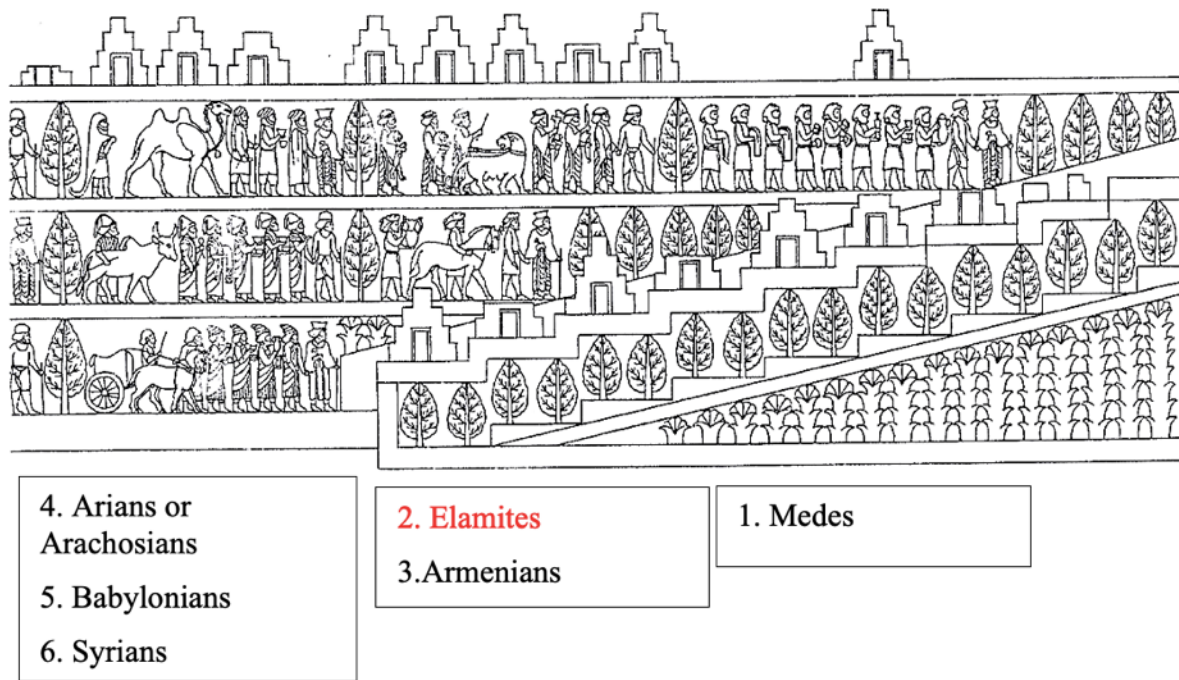


Fig. 6.8.1 Position of Problem Groups II, IV, and VI in the procession

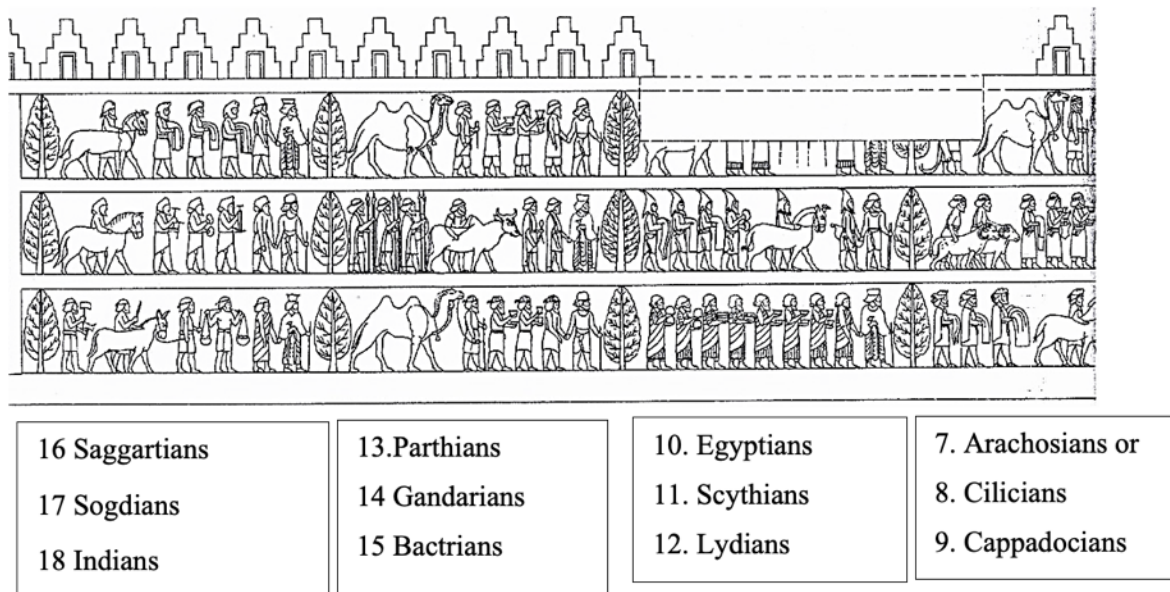
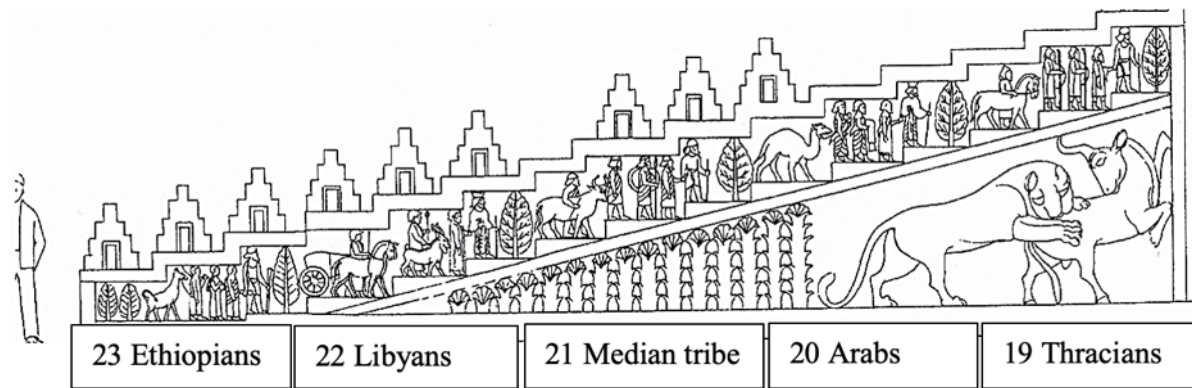


Fig. 6.8.2 Position of Problem Groups VII, VIII, XII, XIII, XV, and XVII in the procession





**Fig. 6.8.3 Position of Problem Groups XIX and XXI in the procession**

The façade is covered by eighteen of these groups, while the inclined side of the stairway is used for the remaining five groups (Wilber, 1969:87). Figs. 6.8.1, 6.8.2, and 6.8.3 are representations of the reliefs on the Apadana of the twenty-three tribute/gift bearers (After Wiesehöfer 2007:36).

#### **6.4.3 Analysis of Problem Group II: Elamites and Susians**

The Problem Groups will be analysed using the combined Panofsky/Keel method. In the case of group II, there will be no comparisons as we are only dealing with one group.

There are two names involved but just one depiction is shown. The historical background discussed in 6.4.2.1 shed some light on this problem. Actually, it is more than one group from the same geographical area and with common boundaries living in close proximity – almost intertwined.

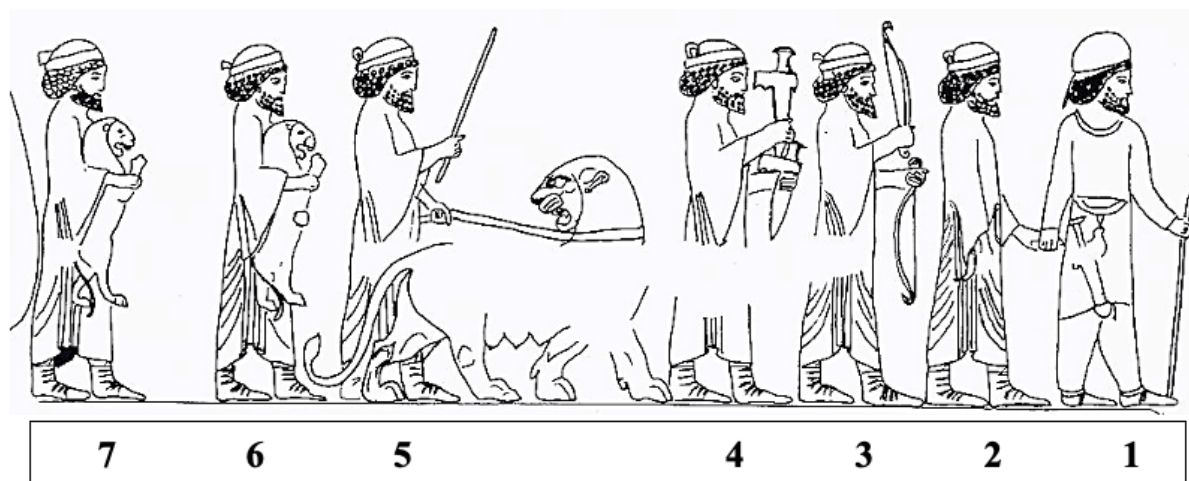
The analysis process will be divided into total ‘reading’ and analytical ‘reading’. During this process, certain criteria will be used - geographical location, composition<sup>81</sup>, facial features, clothing (head and body covering, shoes), decorations, and kinds of gifts. The number of delegates in each group cannot be used as a criterion because it varies. This variation is caused by a spatial problem and depends on whether animals are present or absent in the depiction. More animals allow fewer human figures in the designated space.

##### *6.4.3.1 Total reading of Group II*

The figures are numbered 1-7, from right to left (cf. Fig. 6.9.1). Number 1 holds the hand of Number 2 (cf. Figs. 6.9.1-6.9.2). Numbers 3 and 4 are carrying objects in their hands. Number 5 is trying to restrain a large animal, while Numbers 6 and 7 are holding young animals in their arms. This brings the total number of animals in this scene to three

<sup>81</sup> The arrangement and size of the human and animal figures, where applicable.

The presentation of this group will be read in numerical order. In the delegations under discussion in this study, the first figure will always be the usher – be it in Median or Persian dress. The overall composition of the depiction of the tribute bearers is symmetrical with three figures of the delegation on each side of the lioness in the centre.



**Fig. 6.9.1 Elamites bringing tribute (Koch, 1992:101)**

In Group II, seven human figures walk towards the centre and the Audience Scene (cf. Fig. 6.9.2).



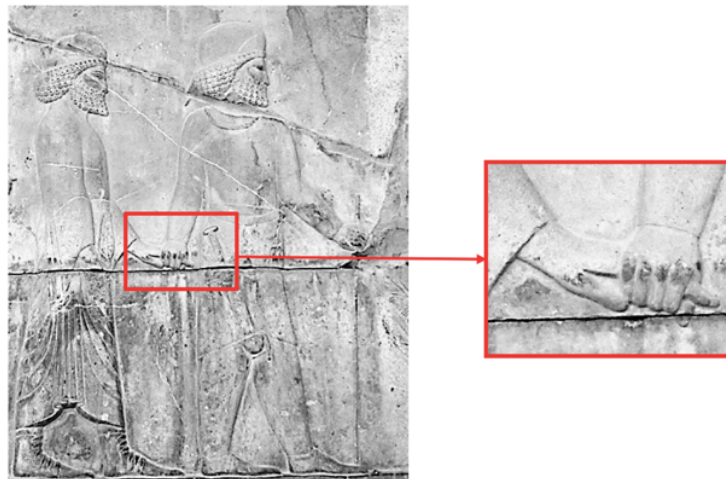
**Fig. 6.9.2 Elamite delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel II)**

#### *6.4.3.2 Analytical reading of Group II*

The details of the images will first be analysed and then tested to Levels 1 and 2 of the combined Panofsky/Keel method (cf. 1.7).



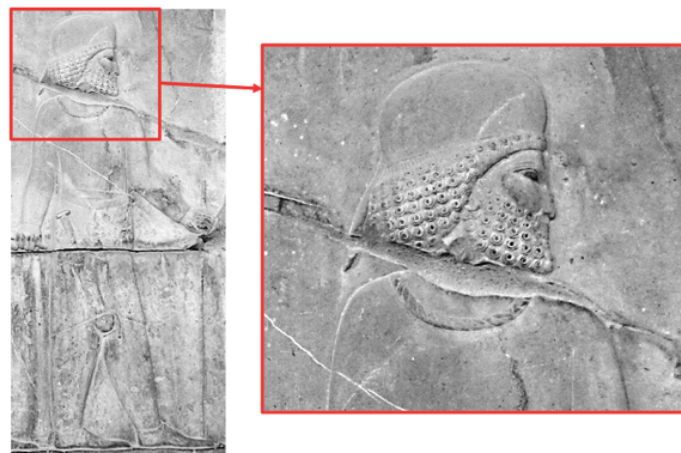
## (a) Numbers 1 and 2: The usher and the first Elamite

**Fig. 6.10 Usher holding the hand of the leader**

In the analysis, special attention will be given to the function of the so-called active zone of the upper body parts, especially the hand (Van der Merwe & Cornelius, 2019:279-304). Hand holding was an important iconographical element in Egypt and Mesopotamia where it was usually associated with religious scenes. The left hand of the Elamite (Number 2) is held by the right hand of the usher (Number 1). The Achaemenids used this element (motif) repeatedly between the usher and the leader of the delegation in the tribute processions where it probably conveyed a ‘feeling of dignified humility and solemn intimacy’ (Root, 1979:271) when walking into the presence of the king. The hand holding had no religious association in the *Apadana Reliefs*.

The different figures in the delegation will be discussed individually or as a small group.

## (b) Number 1: Usher in Median dress

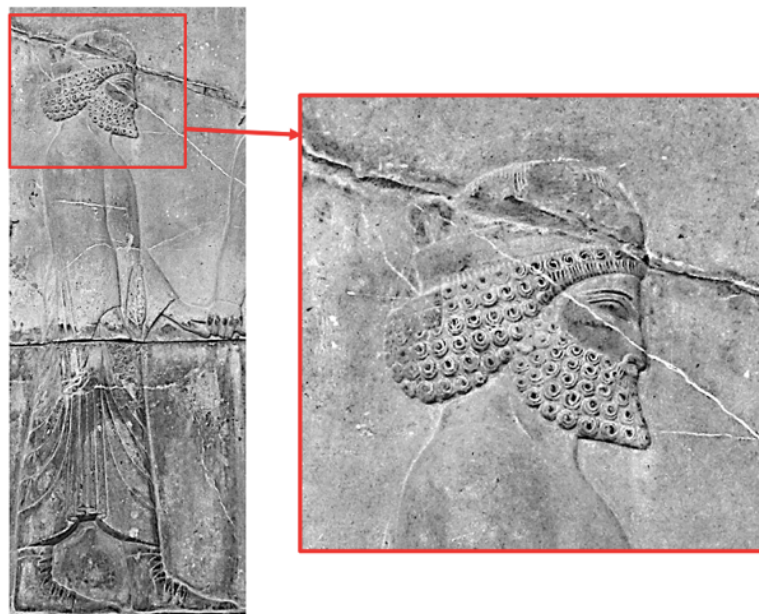
**Fig. 6.11 Usher in Median dress**

In Fig. 6.11, the face and legs of the usher face forward (in profile), while the torso is turned slightly towards the right because he is holding the hand of the leader of the delegation in that hand. His left arm and hand, with a 'stick', swing forward, creating the perception of movement. The usher is dressed in Median dress. An *akinakes* is tied to his side (cf. Figs. 5.12.1 & 5.12.2). He also wears a twisted chain (torque) around his neck. It is impossible to identify the metal the torque was made of, and it is also uncertain whether it was twisted or just engraved in such a way so as to imitate a twisted torque.

The close-up of the head-covering in Fig. 6.11 shows a plain rounded cap with a loose-hanging piece of material at the back. The cap was made of felt or leather. Short, curly hair almost covers the neck and ears and frames the face. A fringe of straight hair around the forehead creates a border between the hair and the face. A short, curly, slightly pointed beard completes the facial covering.

(c) Number 2: Leader of the Elamite/Susain group

Only the term **Elamite** will be used in the rest of the discussion.



**Fig. 6.12 Leader of the Elamite delegation**

This figure is presented completely in side-view, but the idea of moving forward is created by the left foot that is not in line with the right foot. Around the head, he wears a fillet that is tied with a loop at the back of the head. It seems as if there is a fringe of straight hair on the forehead. A short, pointed, and curly beard, slightly longer than the beard of the usher, completes the facial covering (cf. Fig. 6.12). He wears the original long, folded dress and a *kandys* (cloak) over the shoulders. Folds are absent in the upper part of the robe where it fits smoothly over

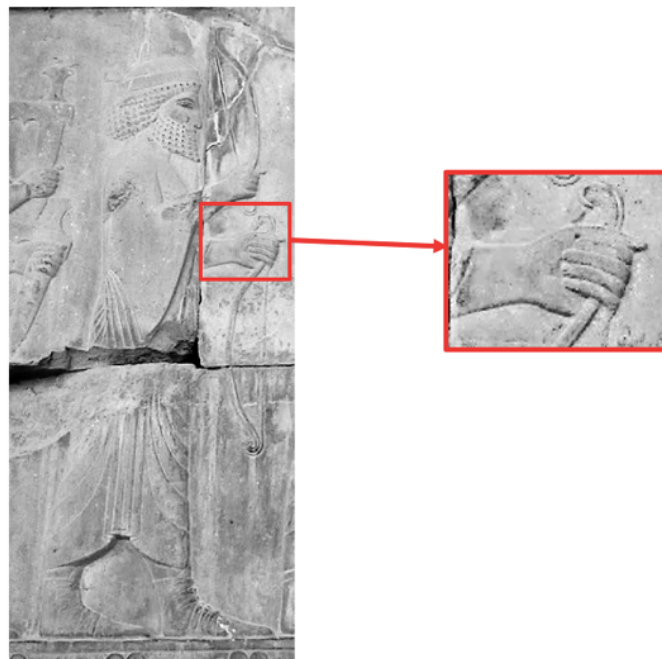
the body. This type of clothing was adopted by the Persians and became their court dress (Barnett, 1957:76; Koch, 2006:38). The shoes were short ankle boots with six straps. Number 2 holds something in his right hand that looks like a leaf. No jewellery is visible.

(d) Number 3: The first tribute bearer

The headdress, robe, *kandys* and shoes are similar to that of Number 2. This will also be the case for the attire of the rest of this delegation (cf. Fig. 6.13). However, their tributes differ in Numbers 4 and 5. Numbers 6 and 7 both carry the same tribute. These tributes/gifts will be discussed in more detail.



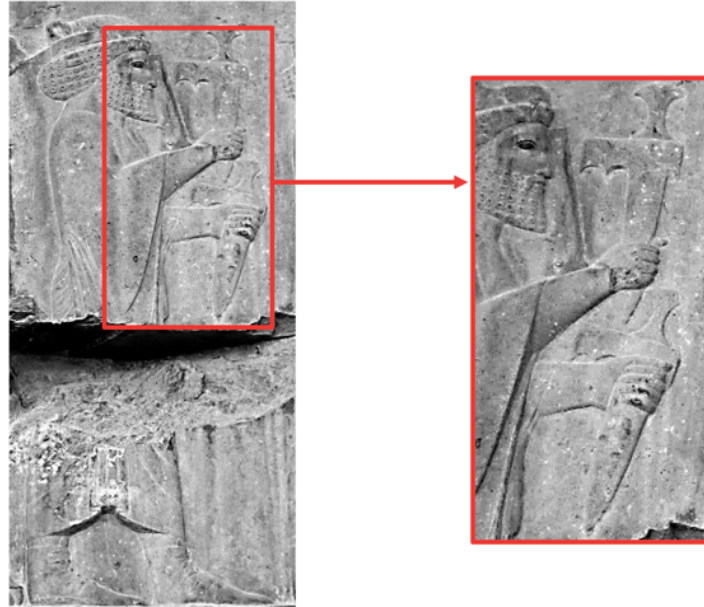
**Fig. 6.13 Tribute bearers Numbers 3 and 4, the lioness, and partial view of tribute bearer Number 5 (Part of the lower rosette border is visible)**



**Fig. 6.14 Elamite bringing two bows as a gift (Koch, 2006:38)**

The bows that number 3 carry are smaller than the ones used in battle and end in a duck's head (cf. Fig. 6.14). These bows can be seen as ornamental weapons. It is not possible to identify the material they were made of. It could have been wood or metal, or wood covered with metal (Walser, 1966:73).

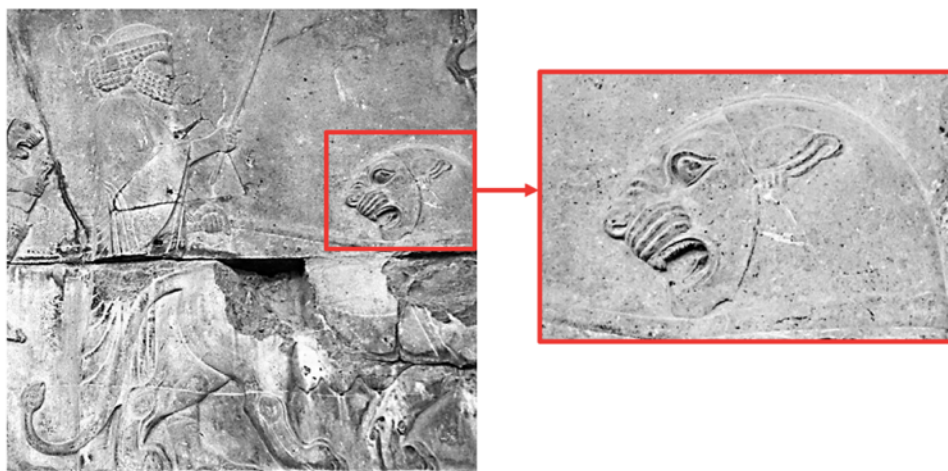
(f) Number 4: The second tribute bearer



**Fig. 6.15 Number 4 with two shielded swords as tribute**

The shielded short swords show the peculiar shape of an *akinakes* (cf. Figs. 5.12.1 & 5.12.2). It seems as if each sword is held in a tight grip, and they can almost be regarded as ceremonial weapons. There is almost a rhythm (movement) in the arms (cf. Fig. 6.15).

(g) Number 5: The third tribute bearer



**Fig. 6.16 Tribute bearer leading the angry lioness**



Lions were non-domesticated animals that roamed around the area of the Elamite kingdom (cf. 2.4.3) and therefore were available to bring them as a tribute/gift to the king. They were usually transported in a closed cart but here there is no sign of a cart in this relief (Koch, 1992:101; cf. Fig. 6.16.). Lions must have been held in high esteem by the Achaemenids because there are so many depictions of lions in the reliefs at Persepolis e.g., striding rows of lions on the baldachin over the seated king, on the door jambs of the 100 Column Hall (cf. Fig. 4.5), the repetition of the lion and bull scenes (cf. Fig. 4.20.1), decorations on the royal robe and the lioness<sup>82</sup> and her cubs in delegation II discussed below.

The right hand of figure Number 5 holds a stick ready for use, while a rope in his left hand is strained in an effort to prevent the lioness from reaching out to her cubs. The whole body of Number 5 faces forward. No emotion is visible on his face despite the fact that he is leading a dangerous and vicious animal. The exquisitely carved face of the human image just stares emotionless ahead. Details of the curly hair on the heads and beards called for expert craftsmanship (cf. 4.2.3.2).

The striding lioness dominates the centre of the depiction of Group II. Her posterior part shows strong muscles. The tail, with a tassel of hair at the end, is turned upward. The head of the lioness is turned to the right, peering at her cubs carried by Numbers 6 and 7. In the detail of the head, the snarling mouth is prominent (cf. Fig. 6.16). It is obvious that she is ill-pleased that her cubs were taken from her. Even the flared nostrils are an indication of her emotions (cf. Cornelius, 2017:131; Root, 2002:200). It could have been anger but perhaps also concern. There was no way in which she could protect them (Almagor, 2021). The teeth on the upper jaw are clearly visible but they do not resemble the teeth of a predator. For example, the canines are missing (cf. Figs. 6.17.1 & 6.17.2).



**Fig. 6.17.1 No obvious canines in the mouth depiction**



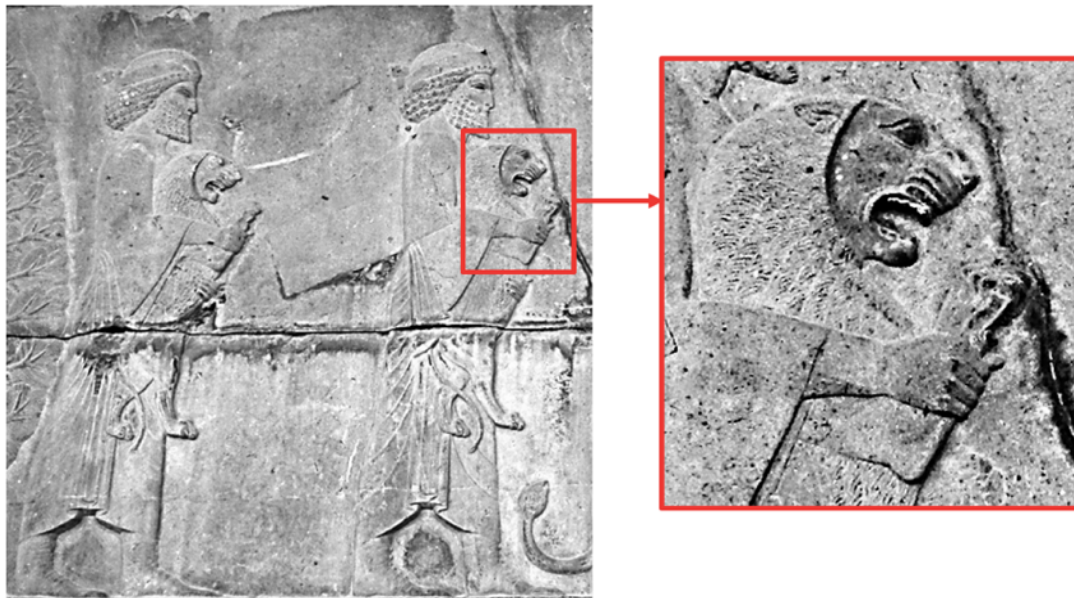
**Fig. 6.17.2 Vicious canines of a lion (Ellenberger, Baum & Dittirch 1956:VI)**

<sup>82</sup> This is the only female lion in any of the Apadana reliefs.



It is almost unreal that a ferocious animal like a lioness should be depicted as a gift for the king and handled by a human being. However, Walser (1966:73) states that these lions were a typical honorary gift for the New Year's festival. According to Koch (2006:38), these lions were destined for the king's hunting ground which the Persians called paradise (an enclosed area).

The faces of the lion cubs are miniature copies of the adult lioness – even the four lines that indicate the whiskers (cf. Figs. 6.17.1 & 6.18). The same emotion of the lioness is visible in the cubs. They are held in a similar way as young animals in the Neo-Assyrian art during the reign of Sargon II at Khorsabad. Here, they are brought for eminent sacrifice (Root, 2002:190). The right legs of these cubs, in the Persepolis reliefs, are clasped firmly by the right hands of Numbers 6 and 7. These figures wrap their left arms around the cubs and hold them close to their bodies. The hind legs of the cubs swing freely (cf. Fig. 6.18). The way they are held actually leave the cubs defenceless (Walser, 1966:73).



**Fig. 6.18 Numbers 6 and 7 each carrying a snarling lion cub**

According to most scholars, the procession, which includes Group II, is monotonous (Frankfort, 1969:231; Ghirshman, 1964:237; Dandamaev & Lukonin, 1989:260). To a certain extent that is true but there was also dignity, solemnity, and even reverence in the depictions as if they were aware of the fact that they were on their way to an audience with the king.

#### 6.4.3.3 *An application of some aspects of levels 1 and 2 in the combined methodology of Panofsky and Keel*

The primary subject matter distinguishes between human and animal forms. The motif of a strong lioness indicates the power of the adult animal. She is also concerned about her smaller and weaker cubs. Does this reflect the power of the monarch and his concern for his underlings?

With a small variety of tools at their disposal, the skilled artists succeeded in producing recognisable and detailed human and animal figures in the form of low-reliefs on stone panels. The images are true to life although the human figures show little movement of the body and facial expression. The animals express their plight in their angry, snarling faces. The hands of the human figures perform an essential holding function in the depiction of the images.

Attention was given by the artists to create the right proportion between man and animal. If one compares the size of the figures in the reliefs in Group II, it is clear that they are slightly smaller than the average height of a visitor. The majority of the photographs in this chapter were taken in 2015 and the quality of the images differs, depending on the damage done by human beings, erosion, and/or acid rain.

One must also keep in mind that the whole procession was painted in bright colours. This must have enhanced the impact it had on the visitor. Although it is currently just a monotone grey, it still has an enormous impact on the viewer.

There is little evidence of decoration, apart from the rosette borders and striding lions. However, the usher wears a torque around his neck. It is made of some kind of metal, probably gold. From the depiction, it is not clear whether it was grooved to simulate the appearance of twisted metal or whether it was really twisted.

### 6.5 CONCLUSION

Taxes were compulsory for different groups of subject peoples. It is problematic to distinguish between tributes and gifts (cf. 6.2.2). A number of prototypes for the *Apadana Reliefs* in the form of mosaics, paintings, reliefs in stone, and bronze bands were discussed e.g., the Royal standard of Ur in Sumer, an Egyptian wall painting, and processions in different media by the Assyrians.

During the discussion of the historical background of Group II, it became clear that Elam and Susiana functioned as independent entities for quite some time. However, by 539 BCE they functioned as a combined unit within a common border. Geographically, Elam was a neighbour

of Mesopotamia, but they also had the benefit of the Persian Gulf as marine access which brought trade benefits.

The depiction of twenty-three groups of subject peoples in Wiesehöfer's diagram provides an inkling of the enormity of the reliefs sculptured on the eastern façade of the Apadana.

An investigation into the uncertainties of the identification of eleven groups commenced by using a combined methodology on Group II - the first of the eleven Problem Groups.

In the following chapters, the same route will be followed. Similarities in the groups might just contribute to changes in the current identifications of the Problem Groups.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF GROUPS IV, VI, VII, AND VIII

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout this chapter, the following delegations from the different groups will be analysed: Group IV – Parthians, Arians, and Arachosians; Group VI – Syrians and Lydians; Group VII – Arians and Arachosians; and Group VIII – Cilicians, Sogdians, and Syrians/Assyrians.

Up until a decade ago, the concept of ethnicity was used as an identification tool for the peoples of the Achaemenid Empire who are depicted on the *Apadana Reliefs* in Persepolis.

Recently, MacSweeney (2009:101) advocated that one must learn to look beyond ethnicity as a criterium for the identification of different social groups. A new model was developed in which group identity can be seen as an umbrella term for a number of social groupings. Ethnicity will not be ignored but will be used as one of the social aspects of group identity in the identification process. During the Achaemenid Period, many cultural groups moved around and settled among the already present groups. This resulted in a hybrid society where the different social aspects of such a society were combined and could be regarded as group identities or cultural groups.

One must therefore be hesitant to identify a group as a certain *ethnic* group. One should rather consider the expression ‘group identity’ or ‘cultural group’ instead of the word ‘ethnicity’. Such a group could contain one or more ethnic groups.

Archaeological and textual evidence is limited but the *Apadana Reliefs* do contribute to the identification of the different groups using certain criteria (cf. 6.4.1.2). How and why a specific group from a certain area was chosen remains uncertain.

During the study of the different delegations, depicted on the eastern façade of the Apadana at Persepolis, it became clear that there was a difference of opinion concerning the identity of certain groups. The reasons for this and the criteria used in the identification process is unclear.

Line drawings of the delegations will be used in the ‘total reading’ of the Problem Groups (cf. Figs. 7.2–7.5). In the ‘analytical reading’, photographs of the actual material or plaster casts thereof will supply the material for an iconographic analysis.

In the analysis of the Problem Groups IV, VI, VII, and VIII in this chapter, a comparative method, as an addition to the combined Panofsky/Keel method, will be used as an identification tool. The aim is to try and find similarities as a reason for grouping different cultural entities together. This method will also be used in Chapter Eight.

## 7.2 PROBLEM GROUP IV: PARTHIANS, ARIANS, AND ARACHOSIANS

All three the names, Parthian, Arian, and Arachosia are mentioned several times in some royal inscriptions e.g., the *Bisitun Inscription* by Darius I (DB) and the *Daiva Inscription* of Xerxes (XPh). The Problem Groups mentioned in the *Daiva inscription* are indicated in bold.

Proclaims Xerxes, the king. By favour of Ahura Mazda, these are the peoples/countries of which I was king... [The people of Persia...Media, **Elam, Arachosia**, Armenia, **Drangiana, Parthis, Aria, Bactria, Sogdia, Chorasmia**, Babylonia, Assyria, Sattagydia, **Lydia**, Egypt, the **Ionians by the sea**, the Ionians beyond the sea, (the people from) Maka, Arabia, Gandhara, Sind, Cappadocia, the Dahans, the Saka haumavarga, the **Saka tigrakhauda, the Thracians**, [the people from] Libya, **Caria** and Kush (Wieschöfer, 2001:60).

In his *Histories* (III, 93 & VII, 66) Herodotus also makes mention of the Arians in his lists of tribute to be paid.

In the ongoing controversy among scholars about the identification of the Problem Groups, the decision was made to rely mainly on Koch (1992) because her diagrams were used as a blueprint for the illustrations and the photographs in this discussion. Several other researchers also use Koch's drawings as a guideline e.g., Gropp (2009) and Touroverts (2008).

### 7.2.1 Parthians

**Table 7.1 Different authors with their identification for the members of Problem Group IV**

	IV
Schmidt (1953)	Aryans
Barnett (1957)	Aryans (Haraiwa)
Walser (1966)	Aryans or Arachosians
Herzfeld (1968)	Arachosians
Wilber (1969)	Aryans
Dandamaev et al. (1994)	Aryans
Koch (2001)	Parthians
Wieschöfer (2009)	Aryans



Shahbazi (2011)	Aryans
-----------------	--------

As can be seen above, the Parthians are only mentioned once in Table 7.1.

#### 7.2.1.1 Geographical location

Parthia was located in the northern part of the empire to the southwest of the Caspian Sea (Koch, 1992:101; Bryce, 2009:530; cf. Map 7.1). The name 'Parthian' is the form of the Old Persian name *Parthava* (Sheldon, 2006:9).



**Map 7.1 Geographical distribution of Parthia, Aria and Arachosia in Problem Group IV**

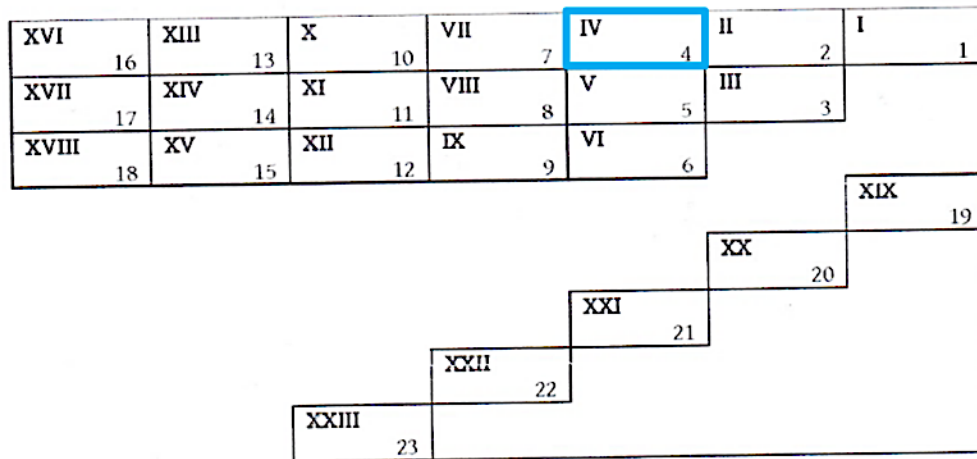
All the area maps for the Problem Groups were adapted from Map 6.1 (Bryce, 2009:544). Based on the scale provided with Map 6.1, Parthia and Aria were about 1050 km apart. They were included in the list of twenty-three delegations of tribute bearers and dutifully brought appropriate gifts for the occasion.

#### 7.2.1.2 Historical background

It was probable that Parthia was incorporated into the Persian Empire soon after it was founded by Cyrus II in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. It was said that Hystaspes, the satrap of Parthia, was the father of Darius I. During his term as satrap, there was a revolt by the Parthians against the Persians but Hystaspes was able to quell it. Thereafter, the Parthians remained submissive to Persian rule (Bryce, 2009:530). They were included in the list of the twenty-three delegations of tribute bearers and dutifully brought appropriate gifts for the occasion (cf. Fig. 7.2).

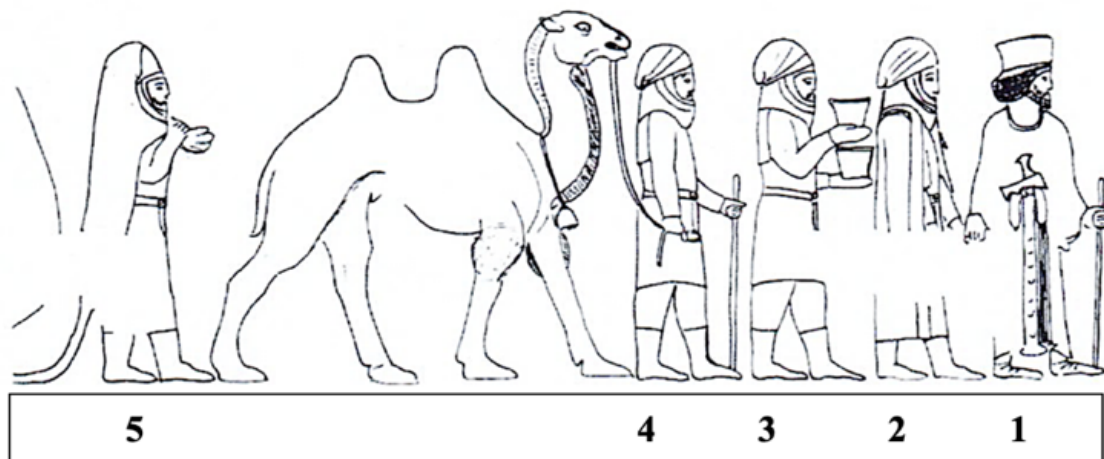
#### 7.2.1.3 The position of the Parthians, Arians, and Arachosians in the procession (Group IV)

As previously mentioned, the delegations in the *Apadana Reliefs* are read as vertical columns from top to bottom in a demarcated space separated by cypress trees (cf. Fig. 4.15). If the most important groups were placed first in the arrangements of the relief groups, the Parthians, Arians, and Arachosians, as group IV in the procession, occupied a fairly important position in the empire.



**Fig. 7.1 Diagram of the delegations in group IV on the eastern façade of the Apadana according to Touroverts (2008:347)**

#### 7.2.1.4 Total reading of the Parthian delegation



**Fig. 7.2 The Parthian delegation (Koch, 1992:103)**

Number 1 leads the first member of the delegation (Number 2) by hand. Numbers 3 and 4 follow directly behind them. One carries a bowl in each hand, while the other leads a Bactrian camel (cf. 2.4.3). The upper body of the last figure in the delegation (Number 5) is clearly visible. He is carrying an animal skin that covers part of his head and the whole of his back as a gift.

#### 7.2.2 Arians

Arians should not be confused with Aryans. Aryans were the ancestors of the Persians who moved southwards to settle in different regions. The Arians originated from a central Asian area and moved south to a region of eastern Iran (cf. Map 2.6).

### 7.2.2.1 Geographical location

The Areios River flowed along a fairly narrow fertile valley and formed the backbone of the Arian settlement. Towns and villages developed in the valley in close proximity to the river.



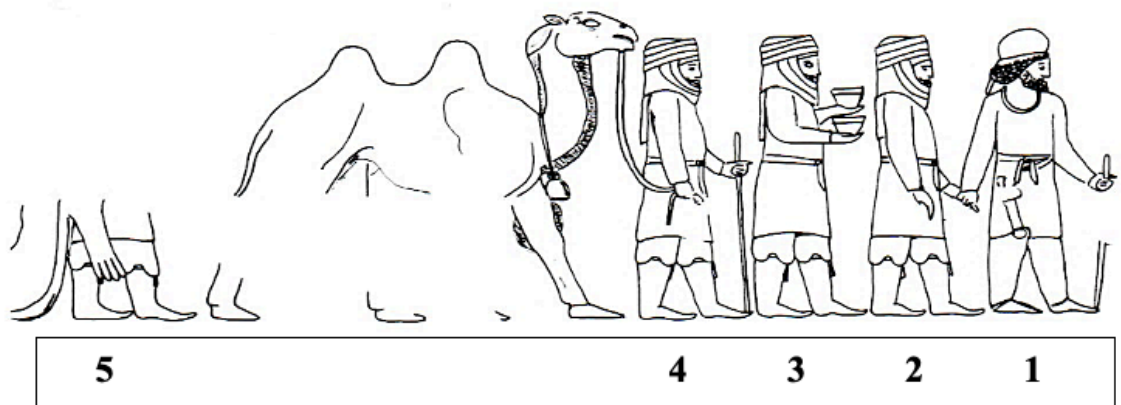
**Map 7.2 Areia (Aria) and the surrounding areas (Eduljee, 2005-2017a)**

Various geographical areas surrounded Aria. To the north - Bactria; south - Drangiana; west - the big Carmanian desert and east - a mountain range (cf. Map 7.2). The distance between Aria and Arachosia was approximately just over 800 km according to the scale provided with Bryce's map (2009:544).

### 7.2.2.2 Historical background

The early history of the Arians is very scant, probably because they consisted of various groups – settled people in the towns and villages and nomads moving around in the mountains and the deserts. Cyrus II conquered the area, and they became the Arian satrapy which played a part in the Persian Empire and later as part of the Achaemenid Empire.

### 7.2.2.3 Total reading of the Arian delegation



**Fig. 7.3 The Arian delegation (Koch, 1992:103)**

Number 1 leads Number 2 by hand. Number 3 carries two bowls while Number 4 leads a Bactrian camel. Regrettably, the figure indicated as Number 5 and his tribute/gift were severely damaged. One can speculate on the nature of the tribute. The paw and part of an animal tail are visible. It probably also represents parts of an animal skin as in the Parthian delegation in Fig. 7.2.

### 7.2.3 Arachosians

Arachosia was situated in modern Afghanistan, near the current city of Herat (Gropp, 2009:333). According to the results of archaeological excavations, its chief city can perhaps be identified as ‘Old Kandahar’ (cf. Map 7.3). These excavations also indicate occupation during the Persian Period (Bryce, 2009:54). As with Parthia and Aria, Arachosia is also mentioned in the *Bisitun* and *Daiva Inscriptions* (cf. 7.2). Although Arachosia is not mentioned by Herodotus, Pliny the Elder refers to a city of the Arachosians (Bryce, 2009:54).

#### 7.2.3.1 Geographical location



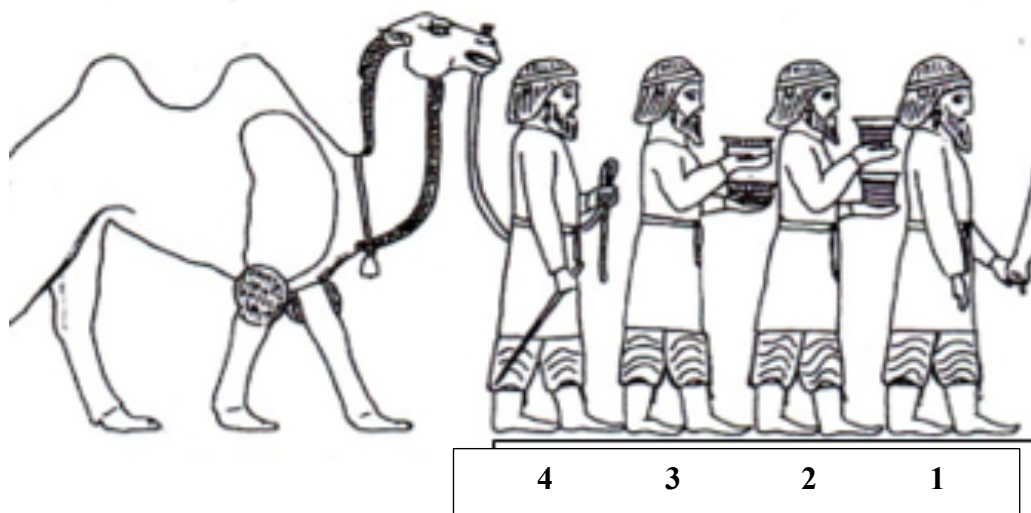
**Map 7.3 Geographical distribution of Parthia, Aria, and Arachosia in Problem Group IV**

According to the scale provided with the map of Bryce (2009:544), Aria and Arachosia were about 800 km apart. Arachosia was bordered on the west by Drangiana (cf. Map 7.3); on the north by Gandara; to the south by Sattagydia; and to the east by the Indus River.

### 7.2.3.2 Historical background

The ancient history of Arachosia is meagre. Cyrus II incorporated Arachosia into the empire ‘probably during a campaign which he conducted into central Asia sometime after his conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE’ (Bryce, 2009:54). It is also known that during the revolt at the beginning of Darius’ rule the province of Arachosia remained loyal to Darius (Bryce, 2009:54).

### 7.2.3.3 Total reading of the Arachosian delegation

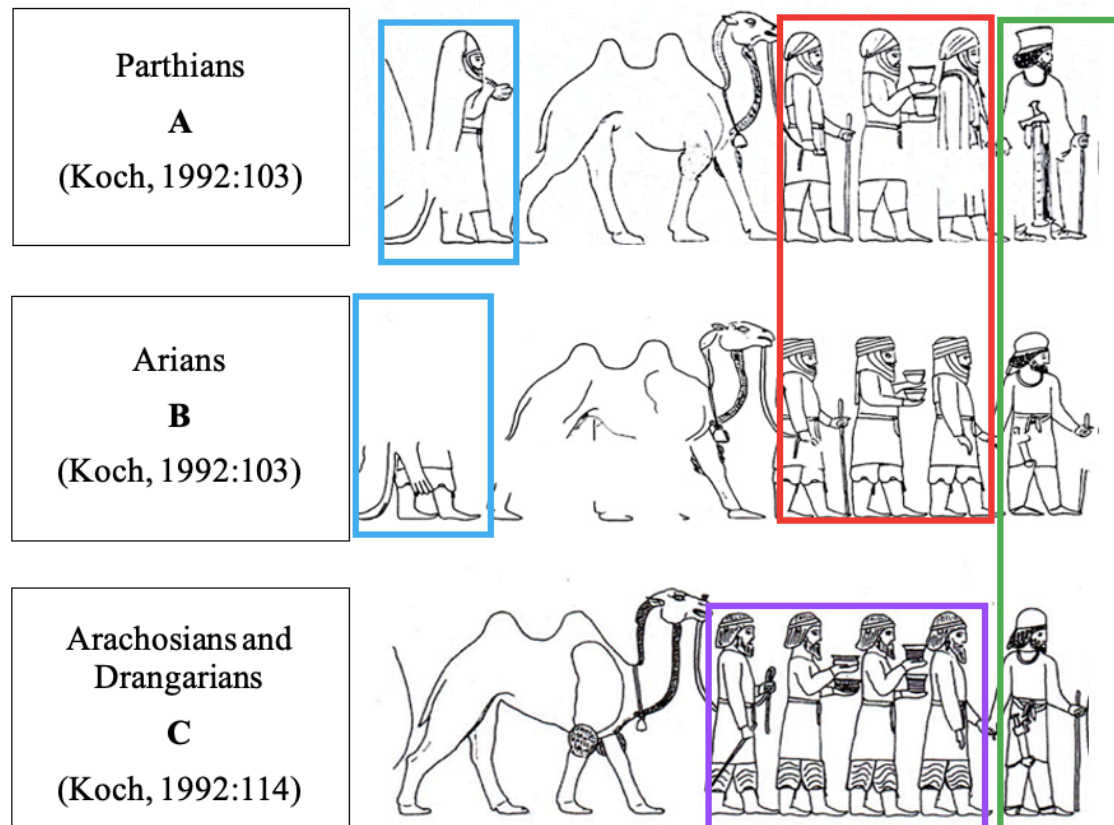


**Fig. 7.4 Delegation of Arachosians and Drangarians (Koch, 1992:114)**

Figure Number 1 leads the second figure by the hand (cf. Fig. 7.4). Numbers 3 and 4 both carry a bowl in each hand while Number 5 leads a Bactrian camel with his left hand and holds a staff in his right. The camel has a knee pad or camel hair that have been trimmed on both front legs to protect the knees when kneeling down for the rider to dismount or to unload the cargo carried by the camel.

In Fig. 7.5, similarities and differences between the depictions come to light.





**Fig. 7.5 The three delegations in Problem Group IV to show some of the similarities and differences in their arrangement, clothing, and tribute**

Similarities in all three groups include:

- (i) An usher leads the group.
- (ii) Five human figures and a Bactrian camel are present in each group.
- (iii) All figures wear Median dress with distinguishing trousers.

Similarities in groups A and B include:

- (i) Headdress of folded fabric or soft leather.
- (ii) Camel appears after figure 4.
- (iii) If one superimposes Figure 5 of A and B, a near complete feline skin emerges (cf. Fig. 7.6).
- (iv) Similar gifts are brought – bowls and a Bactrian camel.



**Fig. 7.6 Combined Parthian and Arian figures carrying an animal skin as tribute (from Fig. 7.5)**

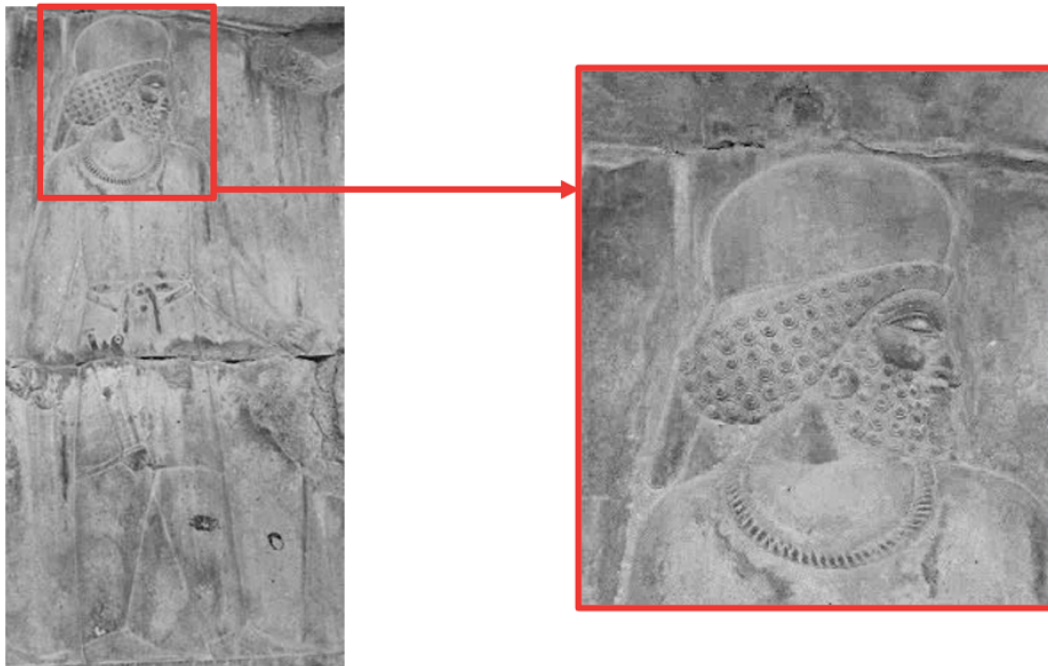
Comparison of the arrangement of human figures and animals within a designated space:

- (i) In A and B – usher, three delegates, camel, fourth delegate.
- (ii) In C, the sequence of the human figures and the animal differ from that of A and B – usher, four delegates followed by the Bactrian camel bringing up the rear.

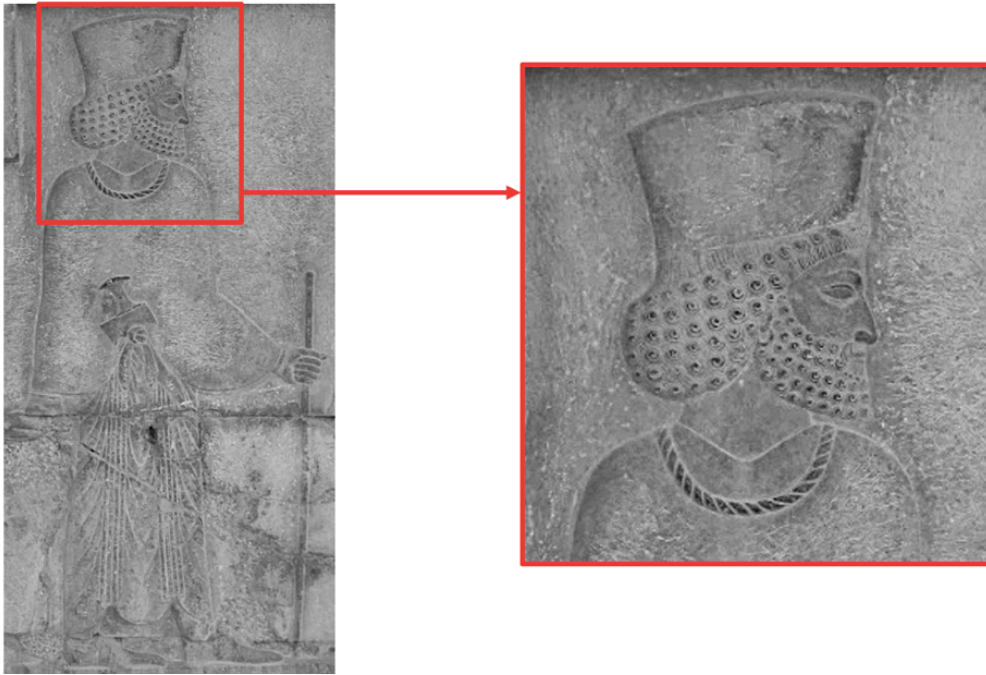
#### *7.2.3.4 Analytical reading of all three groups*

##### **(a) Ushers**

Each delegation is led by an usher. They are dressed alternately as a Mede or a Persian. The difference between the two delegations is illustrated in Figs. 7.7. and 7.8.



**Fig. 7.7 Usher dressed in Median dress**



**Fig. 7.8 Usher dressed in Persian dress**

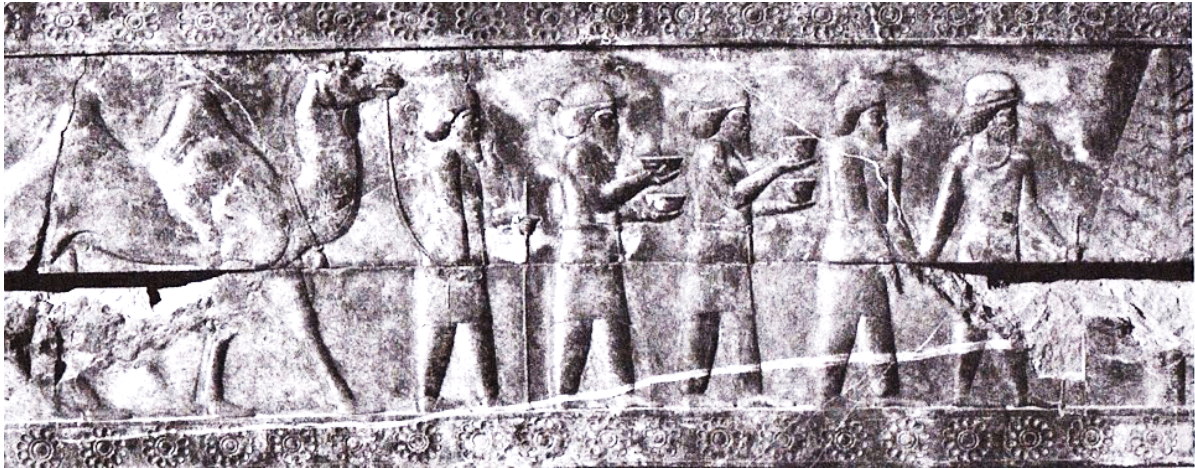


**Fig. 7.9 The Parthian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel IV)**



**Fig. 7.10 The Arian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel VII)**








**Fig. 7.11 The Arachosian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel XIII)**

Figs. 7.9-7.11 represent the Parthian, Arian, and Arachosian delegations while Table 7.2. has been split into different parts to accommodate the visual and textual analysis in of the different delegations in Group IV in close proximity.

#### (b) Heads

As illustrated below, the different groups under discussion, wear a variety of headdresses (Roaf, 1974:96). It is uncertain which material was used. Was the material fabric or perhaps soft leather?

**Table 7.2 A comparison between the body parts and tribute of the Parthians, Arians, and Arachosians**

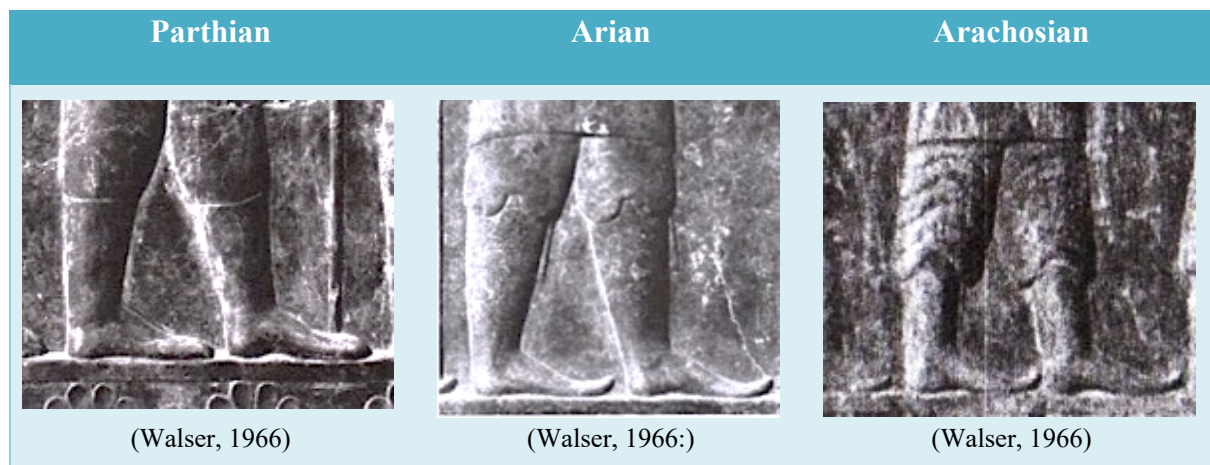
Parthian	Arian	Arachosian
		

If one does not spend enough time and view the heads of the Parthian and Arian from afar, one can easily come to the conclusion that they belong together. On closer examination, however, the headdress of the Parthian has three turns covering the whole head while the three turns of

the Arian headdress go neatly around the head and leaves the crown of the head bare. In the Parthian, two folds cover the mouth and chin while three folds cover the same area in the Arian. What they do have in common is the covered mouth and chin. Because of this, it is impossible to know whether they wore beards or earrings, as was the case in the Arachosian.

The latter only wears a narrow fillet tucked in on the right side of the head. His hair is straight but there is a row of curls on the forehead. The beard also consists of straight hair. A very ornate earring is attached to the ear lobe.

#### (c) Lower body parts



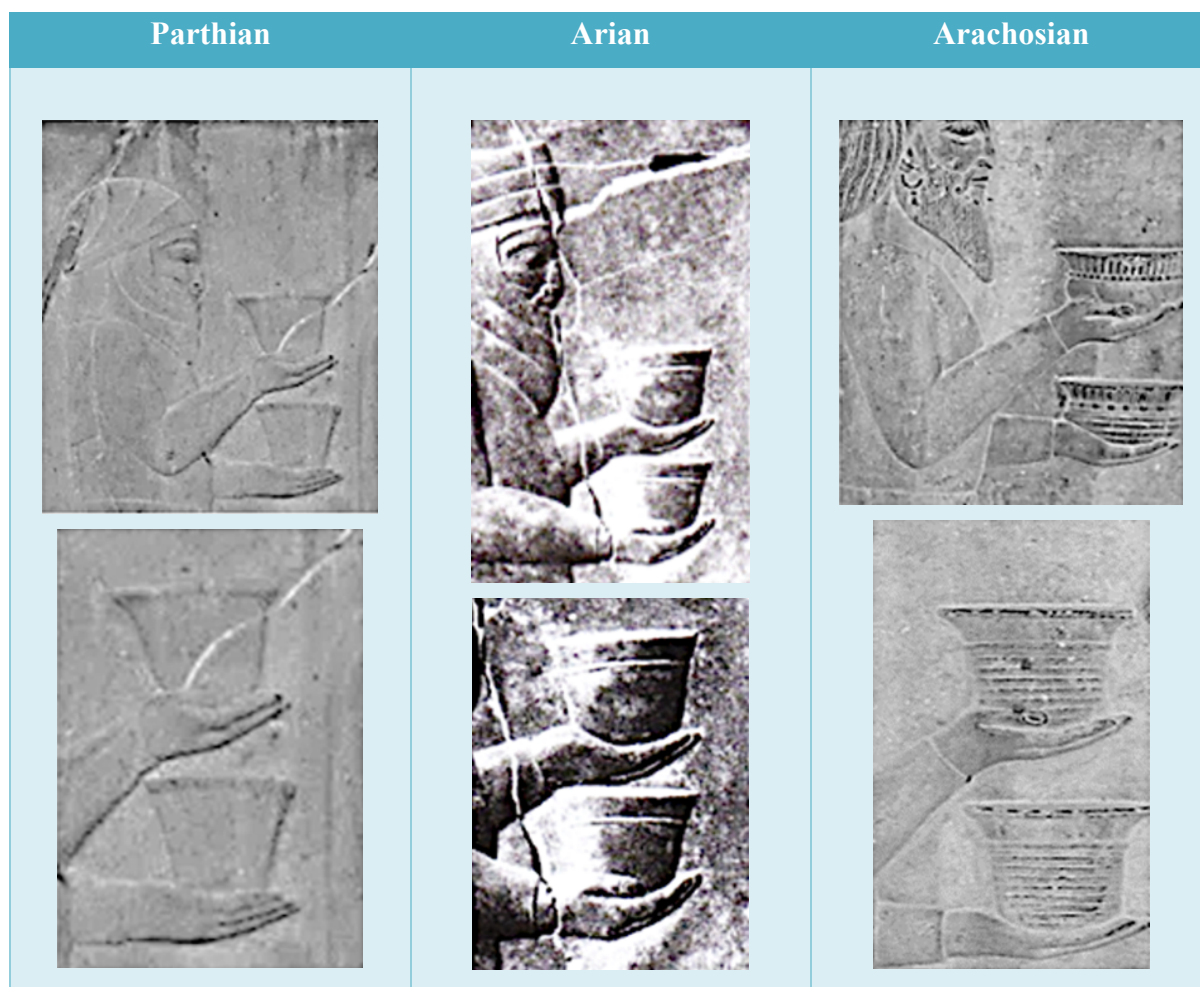
All three delegations wear high boots. In the case of the Parthian, the trousers end in a straight line. That of the Arians have scallops, while the lower part of the Arachosian's trousers is ruffled. The boots have upturned toes in the cases of the Arians and Arachosians but in the case of the Parthian, the toes are straight.

#### (d) Tribute

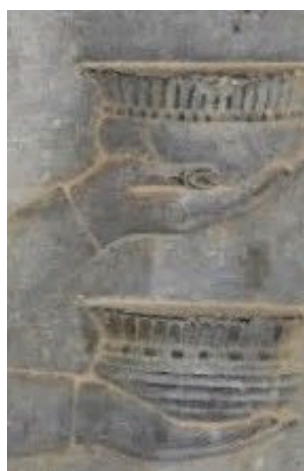
Number 3 in both the Parthian and Arian delegations carry an almost similar bowl in each hand. The bowls of the Arians, although virtually the same shape as that of the Parthians, has a definite line near the edge. That is the only decoration on these bowls

In the representation of the Arachosians, both Numbers 3 and 4 carry bowls in both hands. All these bowls have distinctive decorative markings along the upper edge. In Number 3, the shape of the bowls are virtually the same shape and size as that of the ones carried by the Parthians and Arians.





The bowls carried by the 4<sup>th</sup> figure are different in shape and decoration (cf. Fig. 7.12). The bowl in the left hand has evenly spaced rings, called horizontal fluting (Simpson, 2007:163),<sup>83</sup> and is decorated above the flutings. It is impossible to determine the material that the bowls were made of. It was probably some kind of metal, perhaps gold or silver, that was available at that time (cf. Table 3.1).





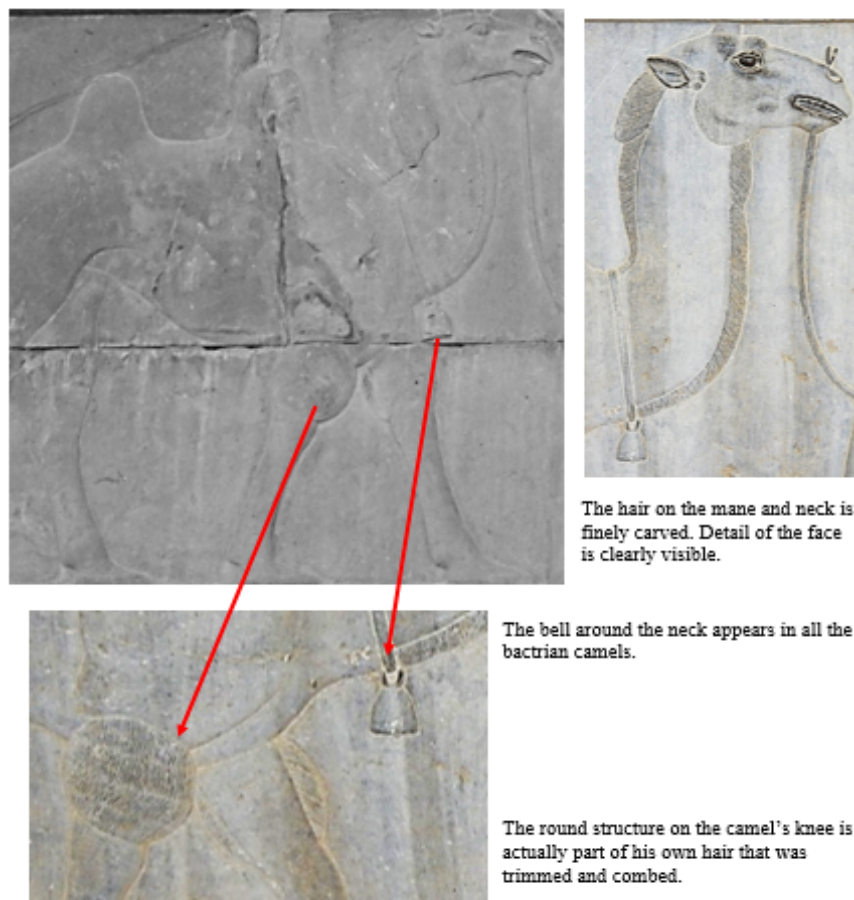
**Fig. 7.12 Detail of bowls  
carried by Arachosian  
Number 4**

<sup>83</sup> Horizontal fluting was a surface technique widely used by Achaemenid metalworkers.

## (e) Feline skin

Both the Parthian and Arian delegations carry a similar feline skin. Both representations are damaged but in different places. Should one superimpose these two depictions one should get a complete skin with front and hind paws (cf. Fig. 7.6).

Parthian	Arian	Arachosian
		No feline skin to be presented to the king.
(Walser, 1966)	(Walser, 1966)	



**Fig. 7.13 Bactrian camel**

The Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus* or *ferus*) was a domesticated, two-humped camel. A short description of this camel species, as well as its dating, distribution, habitat, and adaptations were already described (cf. Map 2.10; Table 2.5; Fig 7.13).

#### **7.2.4 Conclusion for Problem Group IV: Parthians, Arians, and Arachosians**

Only a few similarities are obvious in the iconographic analysis of the three different groups. An usher is present in each group. As gifts, all three delegations bring bowls and a Bactrian camel. They all wear Median dress although the length of the jacket may differ. The boots are more or less the same length.

The Parthian and Arian delegations have a few more characteristics in common. During the iconographic analysis, it became clear that the headdress could be used as a distinguishing characteristic. At first glance, the headdress of these two groups looks similar. In both cases, a ‘turban’ is wrapped around the head and covers the mouth as well. This reflects on living conditions in a harsh, desert-like environment. As neighbours, a cultural exchange could also contribute to the superficial sameness of the headdress. On closer analysis, there is a distinct difference in the way the turban is wrapped around the head (cf. Table 7.2). This then contributes to the distinction between the two groups.

In contrast, the heads of the Arachosians are almost bare. They just wear a narrow fillet around the head. There was no need to cover their heads and lower parts of their faces because the environment in which they lived was probably not so harsh.

Of the three identification possibilities, the Arachosians are the odd ones out. The Parthians and Arians seem to be more closely related but a definite, single identification for this group still evades the researcher despite all their similarities.

#### **7.3 PROBLEM GROUP VII: ARIANS AND ARACHOSIANS**

These two Problem Groups also formed part of the previous Group IV. To avoid repetition only certain aspects will be highlighted to illustrate the differences.

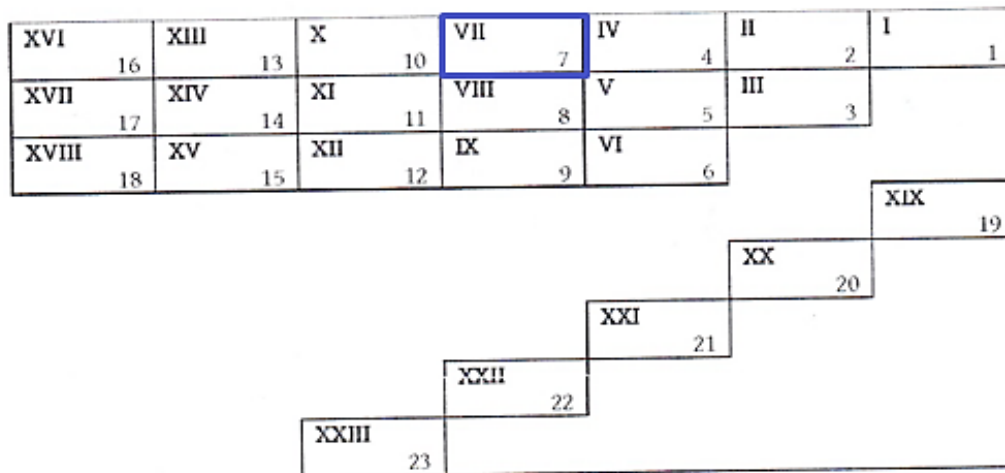
The geography, history, total and analytical reading were already done for these two groups (cf. 7.2.2 & 7.2.3). In the latter, the differences in dress and gifts were obvious in the comparative table.

There is no consensus regarding the identification of the delegations in this group (cf. Fig. 7.14), as is indicated in Table 7.3 below.

**Table 7.3 Different authors with their identification for the members of Problem Group IV**

	IV
Schmidt 1953	Aryans
Barnett 1957	Aryans (Haraiwa)
Walser 1966	Aryans or
Herzfeld 1968	Arachosians
Wilber 1969	Aryans
Dandamaev et al. 1994	Aryans
Koch 2001	Parthians
Wiesehöfer 2009	Aryans
Shahbazi 2011	Aryans

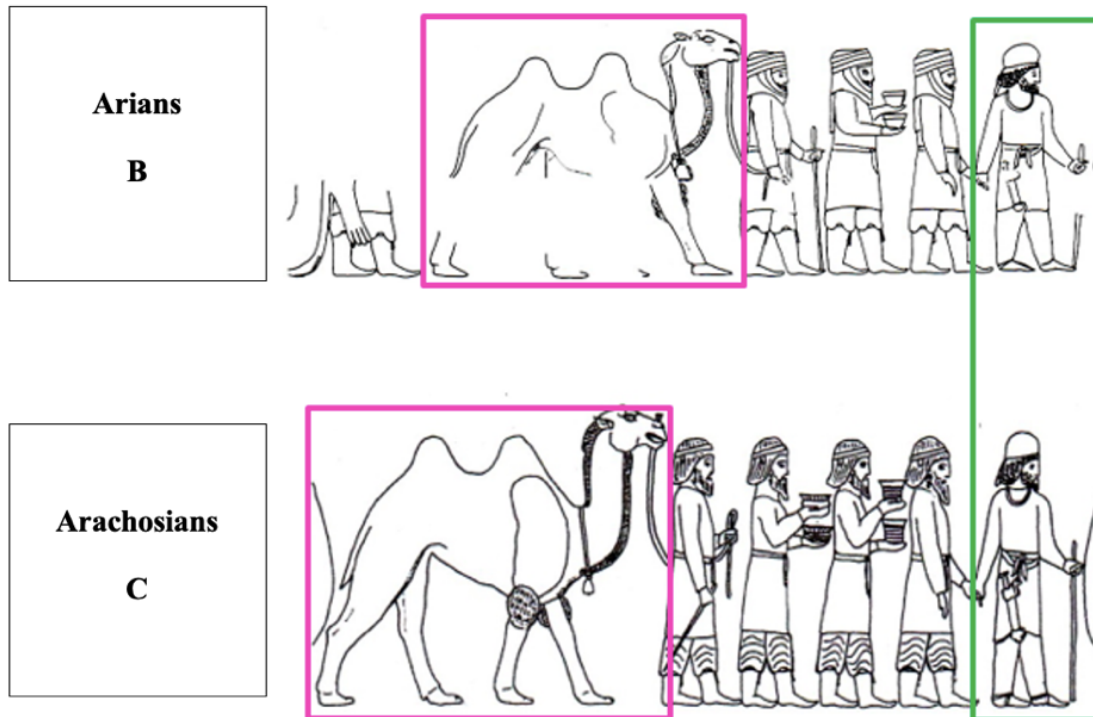
### 7.3.1 Position of Problem Group VII in the procession



**Fig. 7.14 Diagram of the delegations on the eastern façade of the Apadana according to Touroverts (2008:347)**

### 7.3.2 Arrangement of human figures and animals within a designated space

This section compares the figures and animals of the Arians to that of the Arachosians (cf. Fig. 7.15).



**Fig. 7.15 Arian and Arachosian people and animals in designated space (Koch 1992:103 &114)**

### 7.3.2.1. Differences between the Arians and the Arachosians

Due to their number and variety these differences will be presented in tabular form instead of in a list.

**Table 7.4.1 Differences between the Arians and Arachosians**

	Arians	Arachosians
Differences		
<b>Arrangement of human figures</b>	<p>Three delegates (2-4).</p> <p>Position of Bactrian camel – between figures 4 and 5.</p> <p>Fourth delegate (5) behind the camel.</p>	<p>Four delegates (2-5).</p> <p>Position of Bactrian camel – at the end.</p> <p>No delegate behind the camel</p>
<b>Headdress</b>	<p>Covers the head, mouth and chin.</p> <p>No visible hair or beard.</p>	<p>Only a fairly narrow fillet around the head. End tucked in at the side.</p> <p>Hairstyle – straight hair and a relatively short, pointed beard.</p>
<b>Clothes</b>	Lower edge of trousers scalloped.	Lower edge of trousers ruffled.



<b>Gifts</b>	Only one type of bowl carried by a single delegate.	Two types of quite ornate bowls are carried by figures 3 and 4.
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### 7.3.2.2. Similarities between the Arians and Arachosians

- (i) Ushers in Median dress and wearing an *akinakes*.
- (ii) Four other human figures wearing long-sleeved, straight coats with a belt.
- (iii) Shoes have upturned toes.
- (iv) Bowls and Bactrian camel as gifts.

### 7.3.3 Conclusion for Problem Group VII

The depiction of the Arians and Arachosians has more differences than similarities. It is hard to realise what the rationale was behind grouping them together by scholars.

### 7.4 PROBLEM GROUP VI: SYRIANS AND LYDIANS

Again, there is no consensus among scholars for the identification of the delegations in this group, as is indicated in Table 7.5 below (cf. Fig. 7.16).

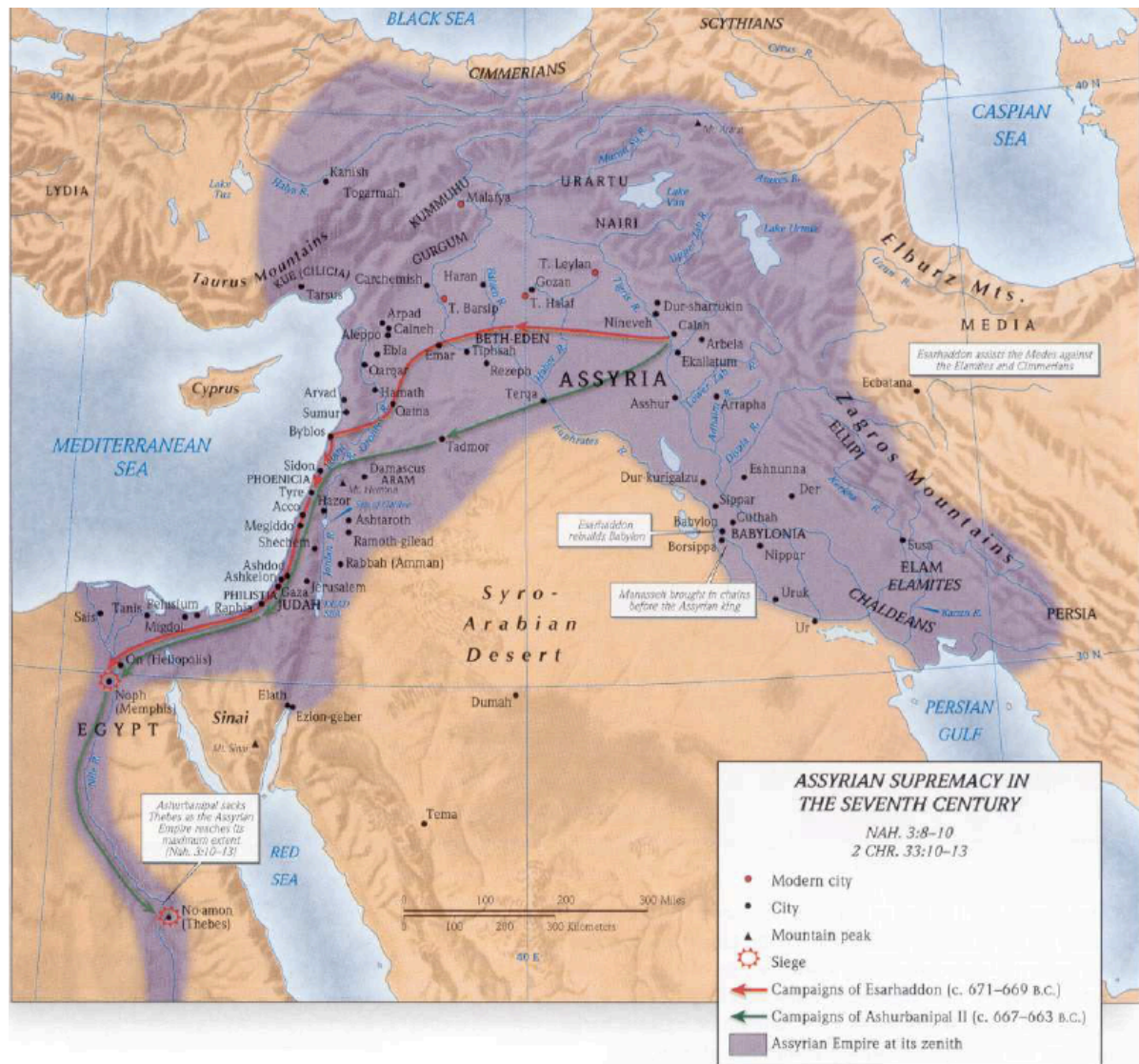
**Table 7.5 Different authors with their identification for the members of Problem Group VI**

	<b>VI</b>
<b>Schmidt 1953</b>	Syrians
<b>Barnett 1957</b>	Lydians
<b>Walser 1966</b>	Syrians
<b>Herzfeld 1968</b>	Syrians
<b>Wilber 1969</b>	Lydians
<b>Dandamaev et al. 1994</b>	Lydians
<b>Koch 2001</b>	Lydians
<b>Wiesehöfer 2009</b>	Syrians
<b>Shahbazi 2011</b>	Lydians

The grouping of the Syrians and Lydians present a problem in more than one way (cf. Map 7.4). It is difficult to determine the actual distance between them because it is not clear where their boundaries were at certain times. They also extended over a fairly large area at different times. The estimated distance between these two areas is about 1 000 km but this distance must be seen as arbitrary.



coastal strip along the Mediterranean with a mild climate (Walser, 1966:7) and a hot and dry inland desert.

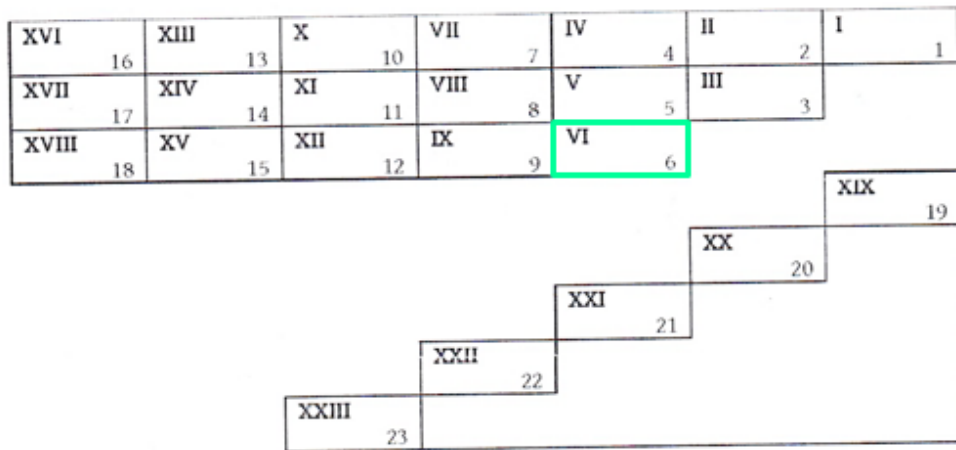


Map 7.5 The Assyrian Empire in the 7th century BCE (Ridling, n.d.:Map 75)

#### 7.4.1.2 Historical background

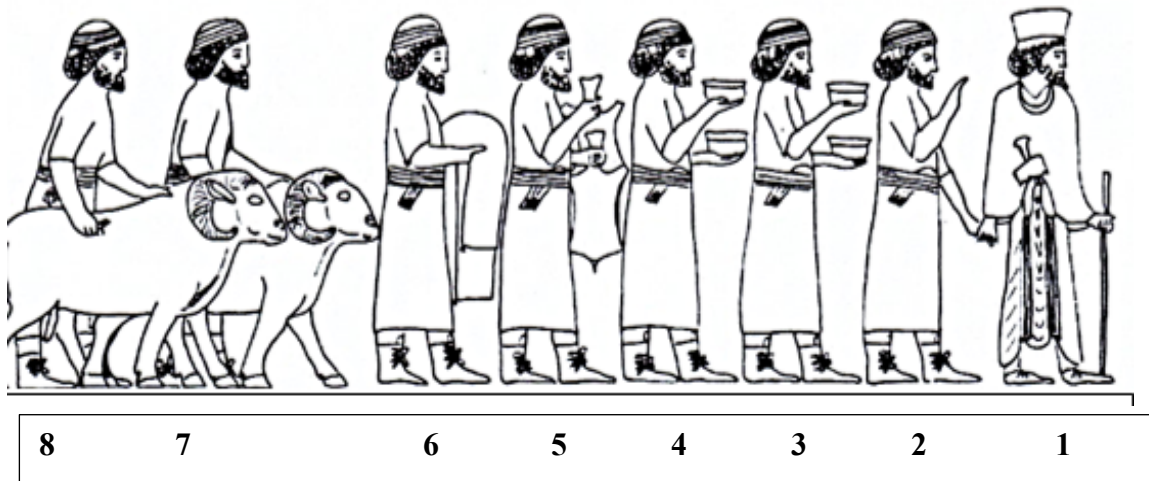
The history of Syria was closely associated with the history of Assyria because it formed part of the enlarged Assyrian kingdom

### 7.4.1.3 The position of the two delegations in the procession



**Fig. 7.16** Diagram of the delegations on the eastern façade of the Apadana according to Touroverts (2008:347)

### 7.4.1.4 Total reading of the Syrian delegation



**Fig. 7.17** The Syrian delegation (Koch, 1992:107)

In contrast to some of the other Problem Groups, there are eight human figures within the designated space (cf. Fig. 7.17). The animals do not take up as much space as, for example, a camel. Therefore, more human figures could be included in this depiction.

Figure Number 1 leads the second figure by the left hand. His body has a frontal view, but his head and feet face forward. The right arm and hand of the second figure are raised in a greeting or reverence, while figures 3 and 4 carry bowls in both hands. Number 5 carries an animal skin while Number 6 brings a piece of cloth or clothing with tassels on one side. Figures 7 and 8 bring up the rear while controlling two animals.

## 7.4.2 Lydians

Lydia was a rich and prosperous Iron Age kingdom in the western part of Anatolia. It was also the most powerful nation in western Anatolia. The availability of gold and silver resulted in the



production of skilled gold- and silversmiths and other metalworkers (Dandamaev et al., 1994:293). The amphora carried by Number 3 in the delegation was probably also made of silver or gold (Koch, 1992:108). Lydia was also the first kingdom to invent silver and gold coins in the time of King Croesus (Herodotus I, 94).

#### 7.4.2.1 Geographical location



**Map 7.6 The kingdom of Lydia and its surroundings (Roaf, 1996:203)**

At its peak, the Lydian kingdom occupied a large area of Anatolia (cf. Map 7.6). The Halys River was the border between Lydia and Media (cf. Map 7.4). The semi-arid plateau in the centre was rimmed in by hills and mountains e.g., the high, folded Taurus Mountains to the south just inland from the coast. The plateau provided a good grazing area for sheep and cattle. Along the Aegean coast, crops were grown in a moderate climate and fertile soil.

#### 7.4.2.2 Historical background

The Lydian kingdom had a long history that reached its peak with the rule of King Croesus (560-546/7 BCE) (Herodotus I, 80).<sup>86</sup> The aggressive expansion program caused a lot of conflict in Anatolia, but it also resulted in the subjugation of most of the Aegean islands off the western coast. The Lydian kingdom's prosperity came to an end with the onslaught and victory of Cyrus and his Persian troops (Kuhrt, 1997:658). Lydia now became a satrapy of Persia with a Persian satrap.

<sup>86</sup> All the camels were unloaded and mounted by men armed as cavalymen. 'The reason for confronting the Lydian cavalry with camels was the instinctive fear which they inspired in horses. No horse can endure the sight or smell of a camel' (Herodotus I, 80).



#### 7.4.2.3 Total reading of the Lydian delegation in Problem Group VI

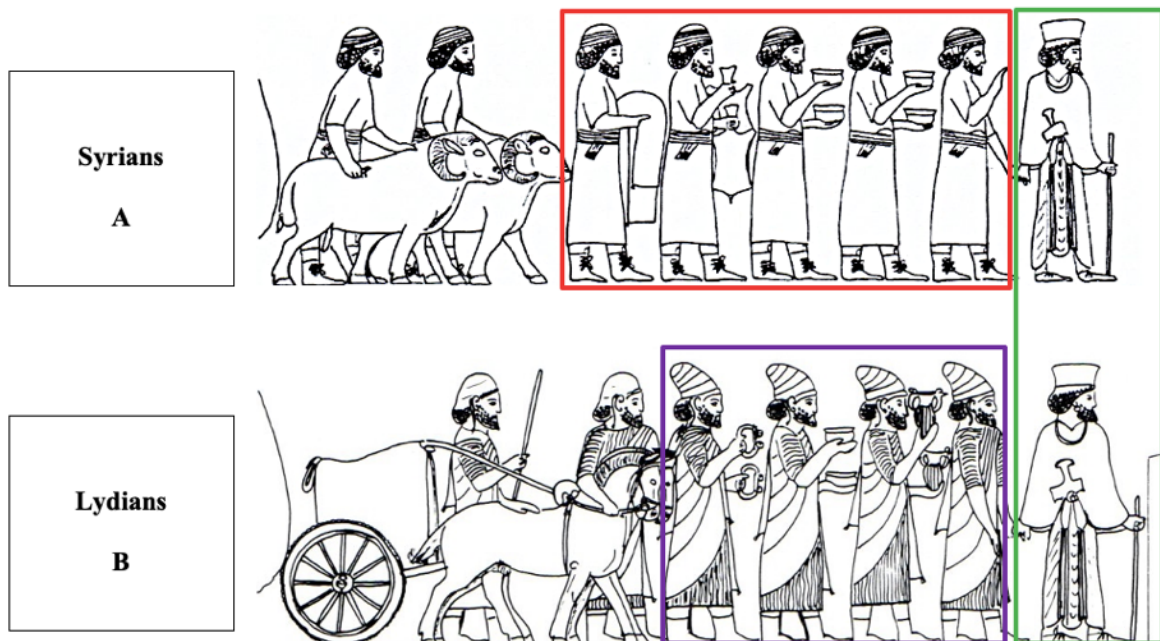


**Fig. 7.18 The Lydian delegation (Koch, 1992:110)**

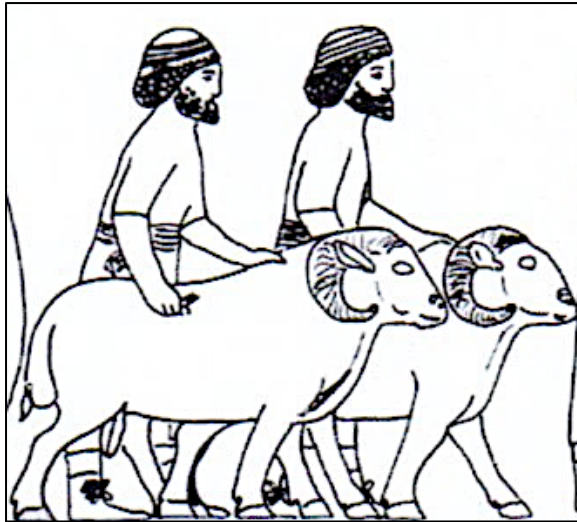
Seven human figures comprised this delegation plus a chariot drawn by two horses (cf. Fig. 7.18). The figures can be divided into three groups: the usher leading Number 2 by hand. Figures 3-5 were dressed in a similar way as figure 2, while the two figures (6 and 7), bringing up the rear, were dressed differently with no pleated headdress. They led the horses and the empty chariot. Figures 3-5 carry a variety of gifts.

#### 7.4.2.4 Arrangement of the human figures and animals within the designated space

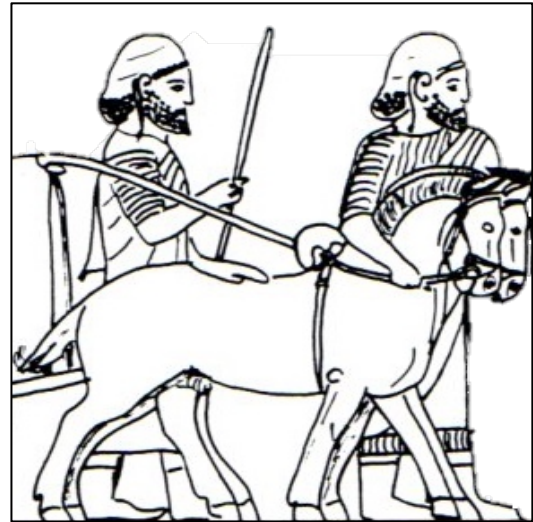
The similarities and differences between the Lydians and Syrians are highlighted below (cf. Figs. 7.19.1-7.19.3).



**Fig 7.19.1 Syrian and Lydian delegations (Koch, 1992:107 & 110)**



**Fig. 7.19.2 Syrian animals**



**Fig. 7.19.3 Lydian animals**

*Similarities between the two groups*

- Ushers, in similar dress, leads each group.
- A variety of gifts are brought.
- The two animals, bringing up the rear of each delegation, are led by the last two members in each delegation.

*Differences between the two groups*



Group A consists of eight human figures, while only seven occur in group B. The differences in their faces, headdress, garments, and shoes as well as the animals will be illustrated and discussed in 7.4.2.5.

*7.4.2.5 Analytical reading of the Syrians and the Lydians (Problem Group VI)*

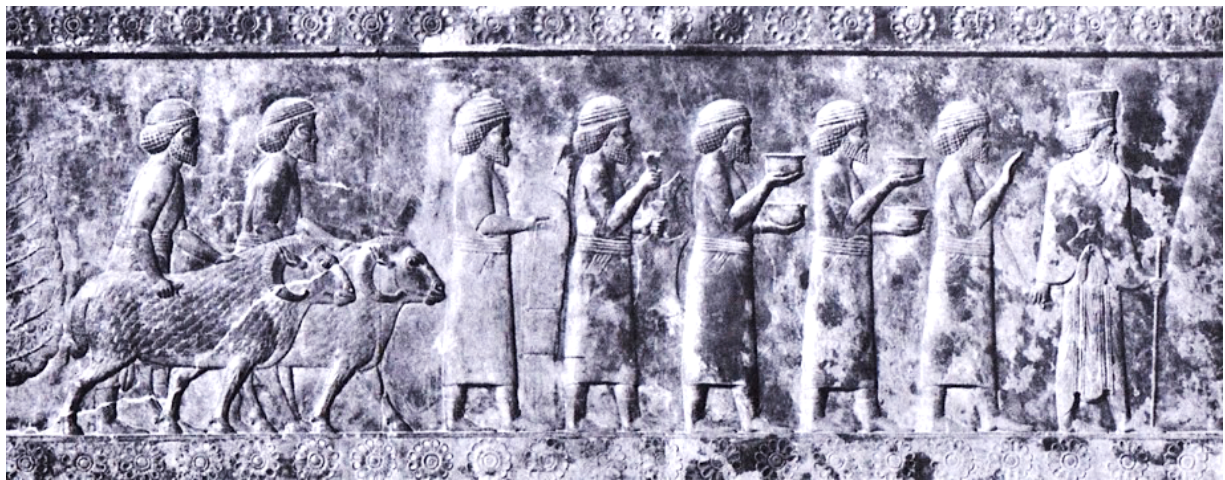
Both groups have an usher with a Persian headdress. Although the Syrian relief paid the price for exposure to the elements through the ages which left it battered and damaged one can still determine certain characteristics. Despite the lack of clarity, one can still recognise the same hair-dress, hairstyle and beard. Both wore a torque around the neck. The twisted detail is clearly visible in the Lydian torque as well as a prominent earring in the ear lobe (cf. Table 7.6).

(a) Ushers

**Table 7.6 A comparison between the body parts and tribute of the Syrians and the Lydians**

Syrian	Lydian
	

*The two delegations in Problem Group VI<sup>87</sup>*



**Fig. 7.20 The Syrian delegation  
(Walser, 1966: Tafel VIII)**

<sup>87</sup> Photos in this section from plates in Walser (1966).



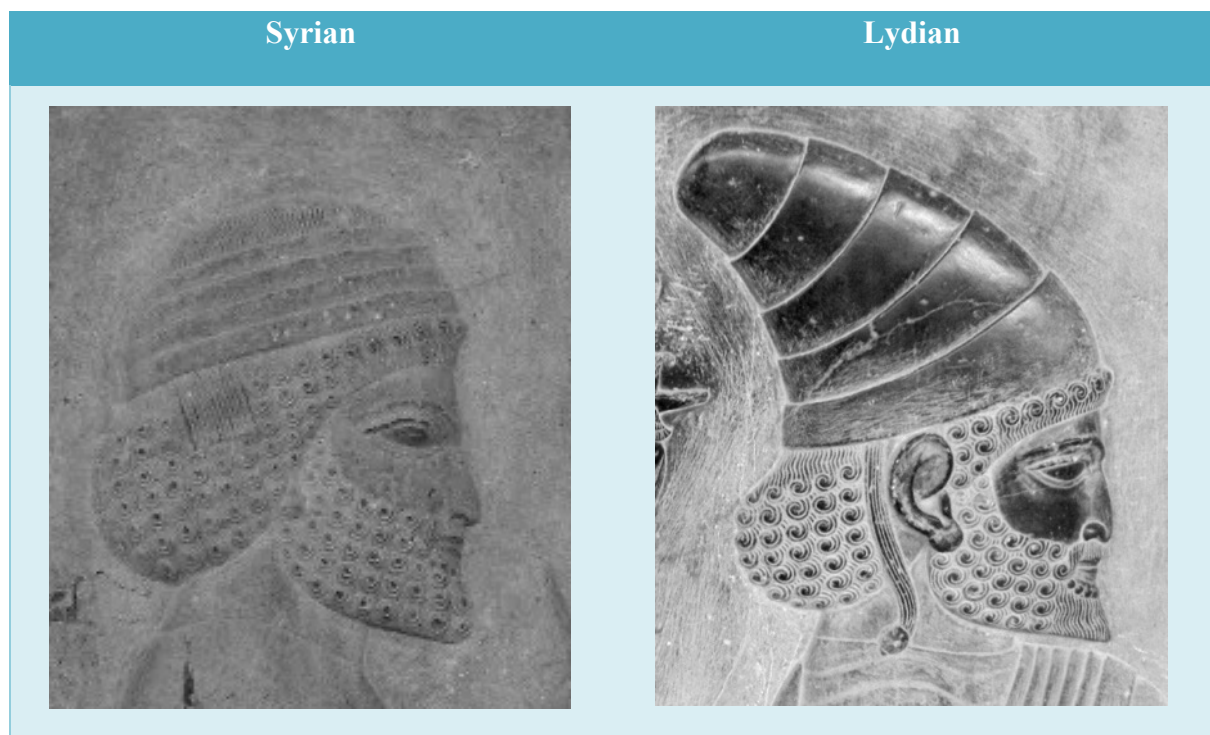


**Fig. 7.21 The Lydian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel VI)**

*A comparative iconographic analysis of the body parts and gifts of the different delegations in Group VI*

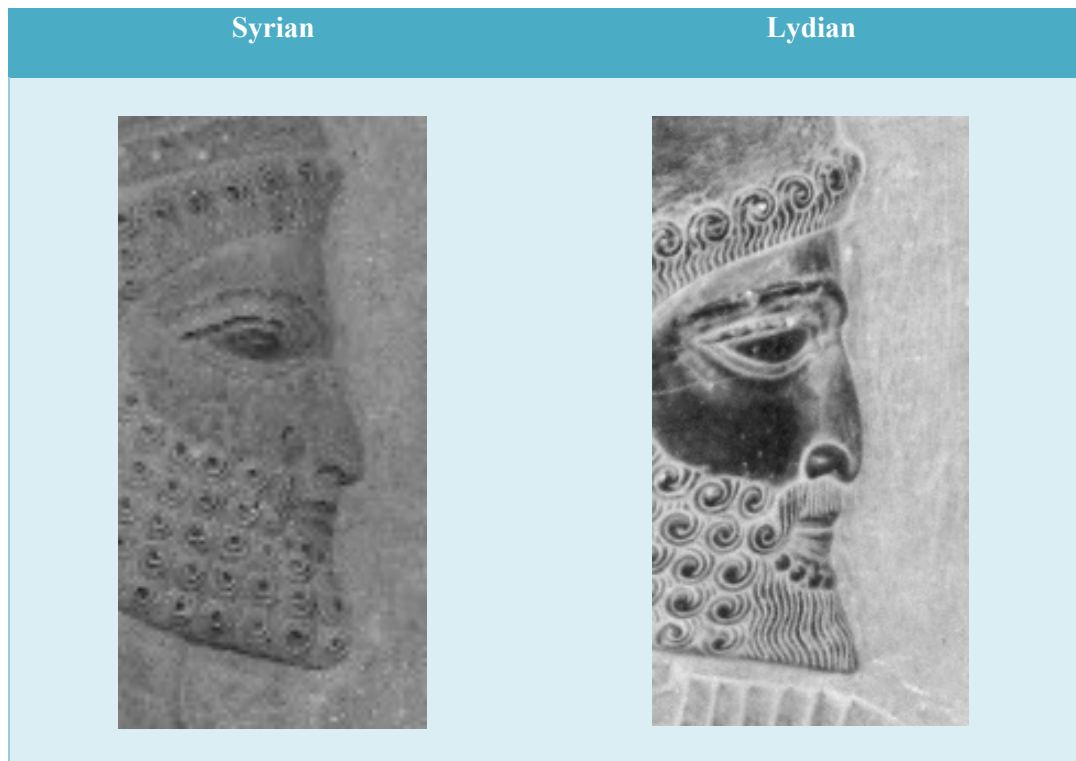
Table 7.5 has been split to enable a brief discussion after each comparison based on Figs. 7.20 and 7.21.

(b) Heads



In both the headdresses, four folds are wound around the head, albeit in a different way. In the Syrian, it does not cover the whole head and some hair is visible at the top. The end of the cloth is tucked in on the right-hand side. This depiction is almost similar to the headdress of the last

three figures in the Lydian delegation. In the latter the four folds form a cone that is slightly bent backwards. The shape of the curly hair at the back also differ. No ear is visible in the Syrian, whereas it is very prominent in the Lydian with a hair lock<sup>88</sup> behind the ear ending in an object – perhaps a semi-precious stone or a piece of gold or silver.<sup>89</sup>



The forehead in both is edged by a line of straight hair with a row of curls against the headdress. The eyes and eyebrows are very similar, but the shape of the nose differ – straight in the Syrian and slightly hooked in the Lydian. The beards also differ below the lower lip. In the Syrian, it is fully curled while in the Lydian, there is a row of curls just below the lip and the rest of the pointed beard consists of straight hair. It is not clear whether there is a curled moustache in the Lydian.

### (c) Clothing

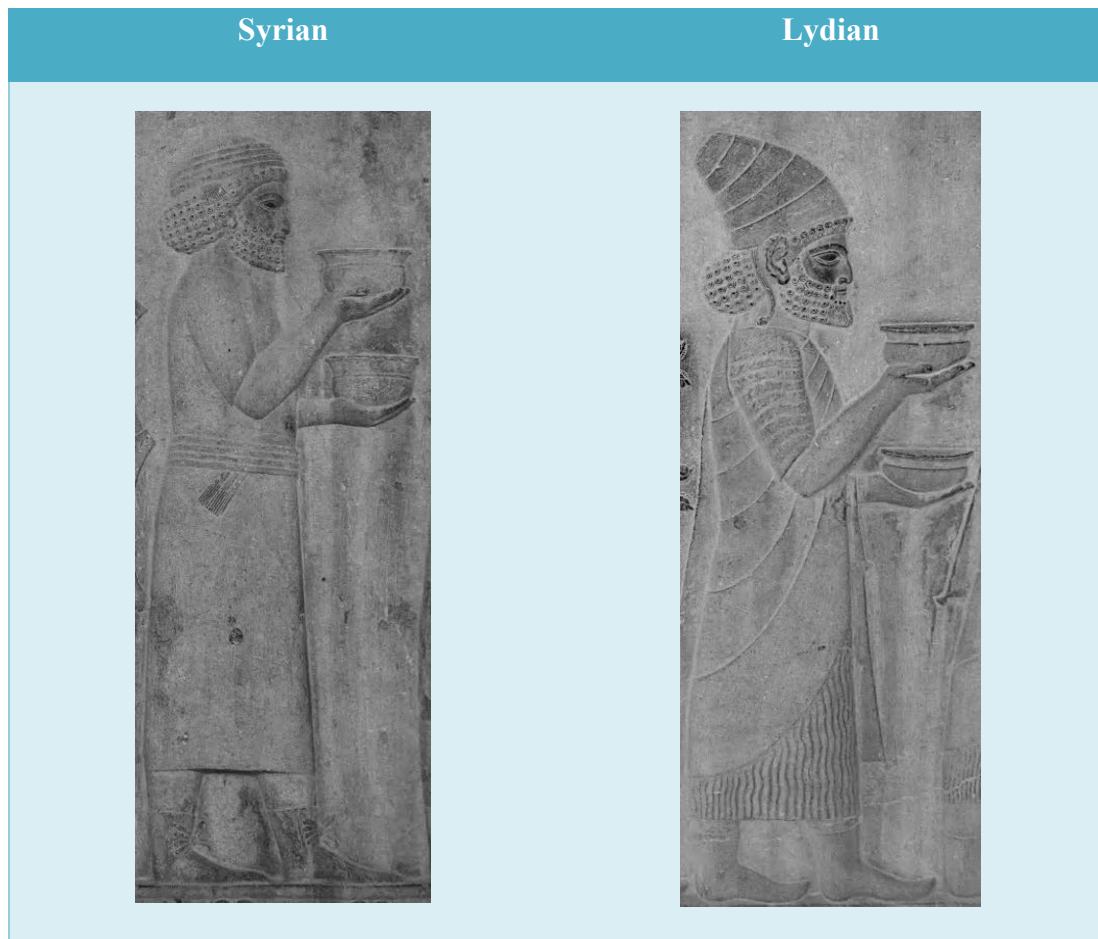
They are both dressed in a garment with short sleeves. In the Syrian, it is just a straight dress with a wide sash/belt around the waist, which passes around the waste four times and the end is tucked in behind the sash (Tourovets, 2008:349). In the Lydian, a large number of folds are

<sup>88</sup> It could have been copied from the people in the Phoenician cities under Egyptian rule (Walser, 1966:79).

<sup>89</sup> Lydia had a wealth of gold and silver that was used by capable gold- or silversmiths (Koch, 1992:108).



visible – even on the sleeves. It seems as if he is wearing a pleated overcoat over a ribbed dress, probably made of wool. In both figures, the garments end on the lower calf of the legs.

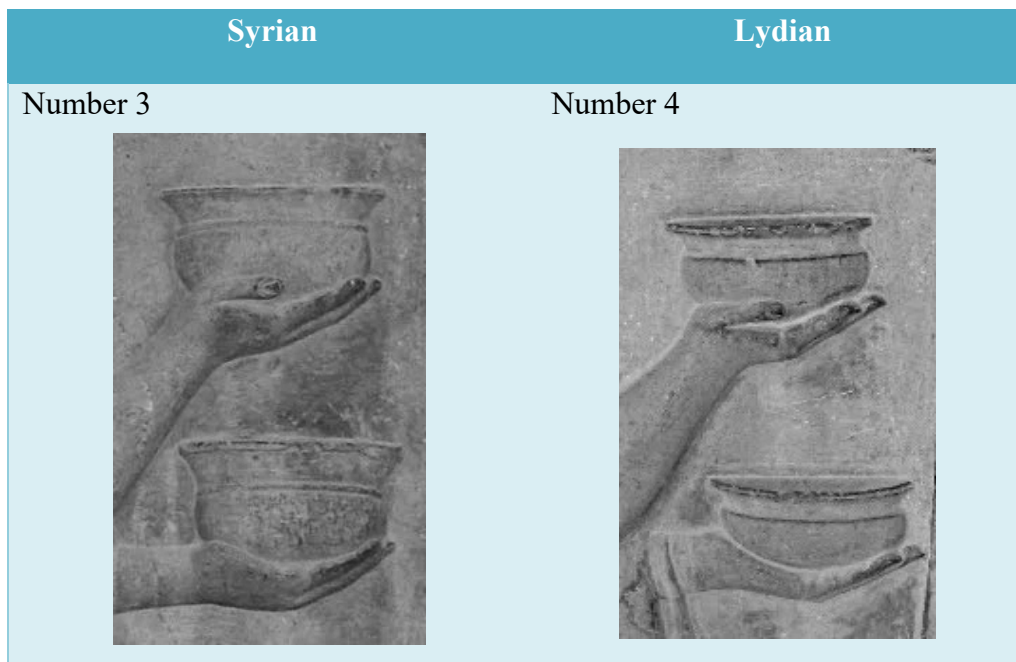


(d) Shoes



They both wear short boots with the garment almost touching the boots. The boots of the Syrian are tied with four looped bows and the toes are straight. It seems as if the boots of the Lydian are ‘slip-ons’ with the toe turning slightly upward.

## (e) Tribute other than animals



In the Syrian delegation, two members (Numbers 3 and 4) each carry two very similar, slightly decorated bowls. In the Lydian delegation, only one member (Number 4) carries a shallow, decorated bowl in each hand.

During a visit to the Glass and Ceramic Museum in Tehran, a bowl was on display with the caption ‘Glass bowl. Mould pressed. Achaemenid – Persepolis’ (cf. Fig. 7.22.1). Almost next to it was the photograph of part of the Lydian delegation carrying a similar bowl (cf. Table 7.5).



**Fig.7.22.1 Glass bowl  
(Glass and Ceramic Museum, Tehran)**



**Fig. 7.22.2 Photograph of part of a  
Lydian delegate carrying a bowl  
(Glass and Ceramic Museum, Tehran)**

The exhibit, represented by Figs. 7.22.1 and 7.22.2, raises the question of whether some of the bowls, carried by the delegates in the reliefs at Persepolis, were perhaps made of glass? It is

impossible to determine what material was used to make the different bowls brought as tribute/gifts. One can only speculate about this but the fact that an actual glass bowl, resembling the bowl in the relief, was found at Persepolis strengthens the possibility that some of the bowls could have been made of glass.

Syrian - Number 5



Number 5 carries a fairly small, dried animal skin.

Lydian - Number 3

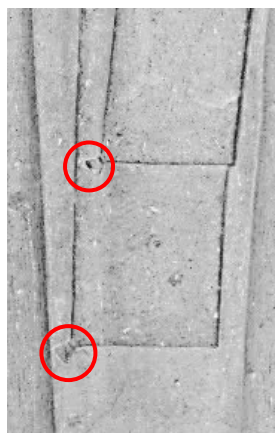


Number 3 carries a jar with a wide, vertical-fluted body, a narrow neck and two ribbed handles ending in animal heads in each hand. It resembles a pottery amphora but this jar, with its fine carvings, is probably made of some kind of metal. Such decorations, as found on these jars, would have been virtually impossible on a pottery jar.

Number 6 - Syrian



Number 6 carries a piece of cloth or a garment ending in tassels on one side (see red circles).




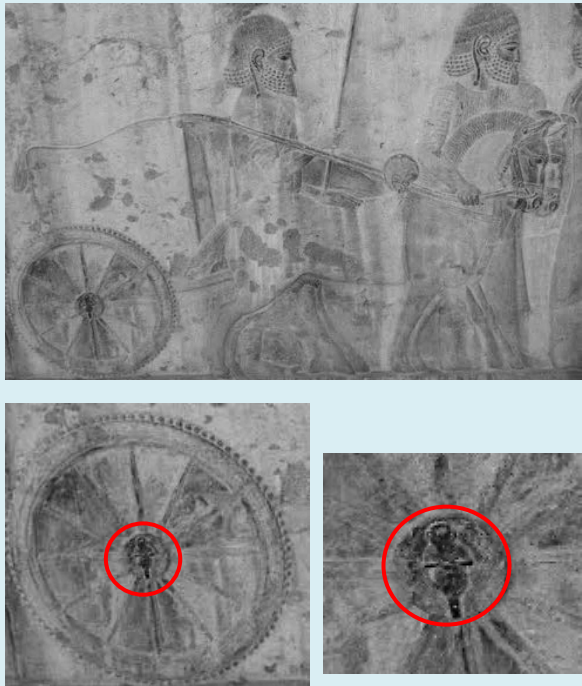
Number 5 - Lydian



Number 5 carries a bracelet in each hand. A chain connected the two ends which terminates in the lateral view of two exquisitely carved gryphon heads with wings.



## (f) Animals as tribute

Syrians	Lydians
<p>Syrians - Numbers 7 and 8</p>  <p>The two human figures bring up the rear of the delegation while restraining two Karakul rams.<sup>90</sup> One of the two last figures (Number 8) guides the ram with his two hands on the animal.</p> <p>The rams are finely carved with detail on the heads and skin.</p>	<p>Lydians - Numbers 6 and 7</p>  <p>Numbers 6 and 7 bring an empty chariot drawn by two horses (<i>Equus ferus caballus</i>).</p> <p>Number 6 holds the bridle of the horses while Number 7 holds a stick in his right hand at the ready to discipline the horse.</p> <p>An axil pin attached the wheel of the chariot to the axil. This pin was decorated with a figure that is called a 'nude dwarf' by Wilber (1969:87).</p>

<sup>90</sup> Karakul sheep is one of the oldest breeds of domesticated sheep in the world and originated in Central Asia. The young have a dark, curled fleece that turns brown or grey in the adult. Karakul lambskins were a prized commodity. Other uses included meat, milk, and wool (Oklahoma State University, Department of Animal Science, 1996).



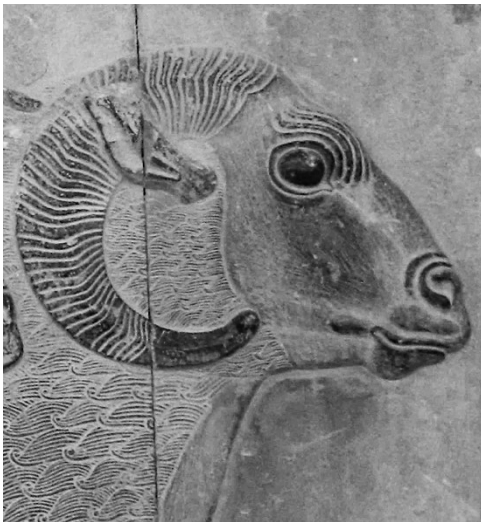
# Lydians - Numbers 6 and 7



The rams are finely carved with detail on the heads and skin.



The dating, distribution, habitat, adaptations, and function of horses were described in Chapter Two. The horse was the last animal to be domesticated in the ancient Near East and was greatly valued by royalty.



The carving of the artist shows meticulous detail, especially the depiction of the head.



The forelock on the horse's head is tufted and resembles a lotus blossom (Olmstead, 1959:276).

Detail on the mane and forelock illustrates the skill of the artist.



Purebred Karakul ram (Owned and photographed by Michael Willis, NZ).





One can compare the detail of the ram in the relief with the actual animal. In the relief, the size of the eye is bigger than that of the real animal. The ear faces upward in the relief and downward in the real animal. The horn and the lower jaw were perfectly executed.

The bit from the Achaemenid Period displayed in the Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago (A22945) corresponds with the bit displayed in the horses in this *Apadana Relief*.

### 7.4.3 Conclusion for Problem Group VI: Syrians and Lydians

The Syrians and Lydians are both dressed in long garments ending in the middle of the calf of the leg but the style of the garments is quite different. The short sleeves and boots differ in style in the two figures.

Almost similar bowls are brought by each delegation – four by the Syrians and two by the Lydians. The rest of the gifts differ. The Syrians continue with animal products and the animals themselves – dried animal skin, a piece of fabric or a woollen stole, and two sought after Karakul sheep. The Lydians, on the other hand, make a showcase of their handmade articles, probably crafted of precious metals like silver or gold. They also bring two much sought-after horses pulling a finely made chariot to present to the king. It is clear that the Lydians want to display their wealth through their gifts to be presented to the king. As with the previous Problem Groups, this iconographic analysis does not supply the answers for the grouping together of the Syrians and the Lydians.

### 7.5 PROBLEM GROUP VIII: CILICIANS, SOGDIANS, SYRIANS, AND ASSYRIANS

The Syrians/Assyrians were already discussed and analysed in 7.4. Table 7.7 indicates the different allocations of delegations to Problem Group VIII.

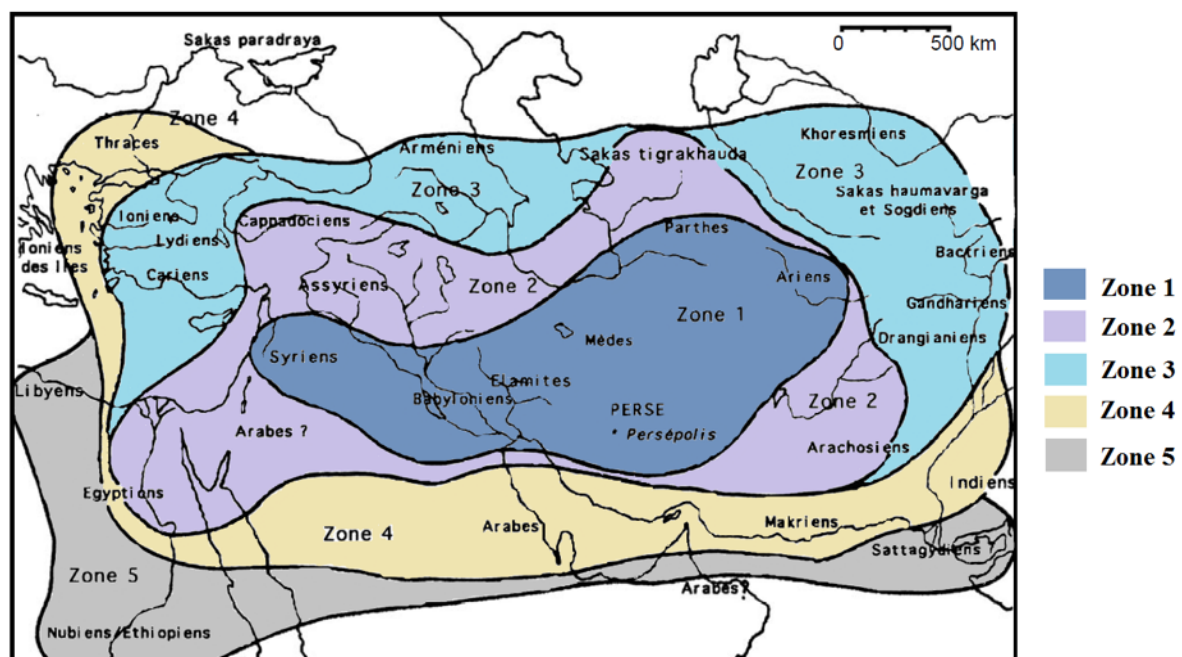
**Table 7.7 Different authors with their identification for the members of Problem Group VIII**

	VIII
Schmidt 1953	Cilicians
Barnett 1957	Sogdians
Walser 1966	Cilicians
Herzfeld 1968	Cilicians
Wilber 1969	Sogdians
Dandamaev et al. 1994	Sogdians

<b>Koch 2001</b>	Syrians
<b>Wiesehöfer 2009</b>	Cilicians
<b>Shahbazi 2011</b>	Assyrian

A number of problems were encountered when trying to follow the same analytical method that was used in the previous discussions of Groups IV, VI, and VII:

- (i) The absence of line drawings for the Cilicians in Koch (1992) or elsewhere.
- (ii) Walser's discussion and photographs of the Cilicians tally with the iconographic analysis of the Syrians in 7.4.2.5.
- (iii) Almost half of the scholars in the table below identify Problem Group VIII as Cilicians.
- (iv) The extant material of the *Apadana Reliefs* at Persepolis is badly weathered in some places. Photographs clearly show this phenomenon in most instances. This hampered a detailed iconographic analysis method as an identification aid.
- (v) The distance between Cilicians/Syrians and the Sogdians was a deterrent for cultural exchange. The demarcation of all the different delegations into geographical zones, with zone 1 at the centre, brings another possibility to the fore for resolving the identification problem (cf. Map 7.7).



**Map 7.7 Grouping of the different subject peoples of the Achaemenid Empire into zones**  
(Adapted from Touroverts, 2008:355)

The Syrians were already discussed and illustrated in Table 7.3. In Map 7.8, one can observe the relatively close proximity between Cilicia and Syria (c. 500 km) compared to the approximate distance between these two areas and Sogdiana (c. 3500 km).

The line drawing and photographs of Syria in 7.4.1 and 7.4.2.5 will be used in the comparison with the Sogdians.

### 7.5.1 Sogdians

Sogdian was the name for the people living in the region of Samarakand. (Olmstead, 1959:46). The Indo-European language, Sogdian, developed into an ‘instrument of an advanced civilisation and the international language of all Central Asia’ (Huart, 1972:17). The Silk Road passed through Sogdiana on the way to and from China to the Mediterranean. As a result of this, the Sogdians became involved in commercial activities along part of the route (Lerner & Dischner, n.d.).

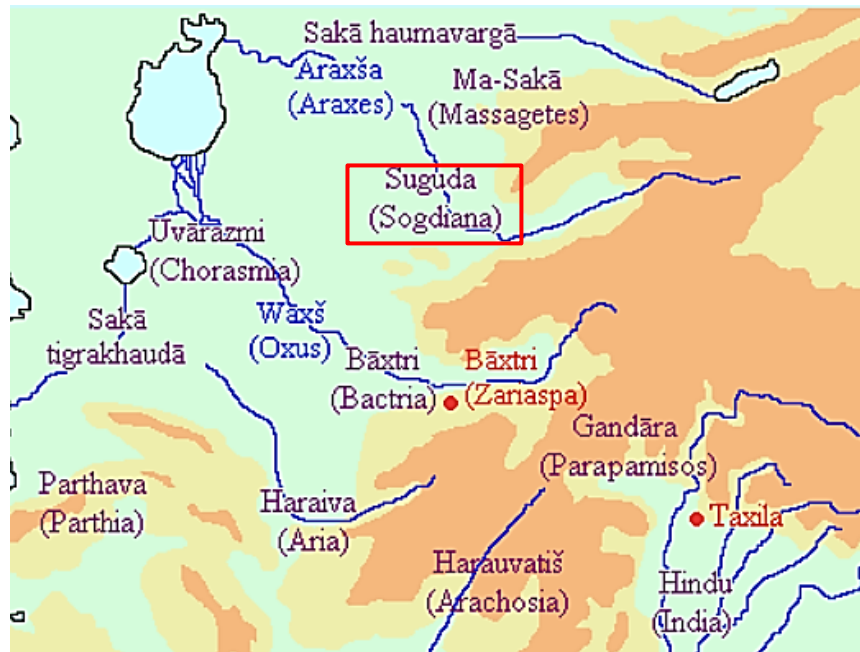
#### 7.5.1.1 Geographical location



**Map 7.8 The geographical distribution of the subject peoples in Problem Group VIII (from Map 6.1)**

Syria is surrounded by a double line because it is the second time it appears in a Problem Group (cf. Map 7.8).

The homeland of the Sogdians was situated between the Oxus River to the south and the Jaxartes River to the north. In the northwest of the homeland, fertile valleys occurred while a large desert filled part of the southeastern area between the rivers (cf. Map 7.9).



**Map 7.9 Sogdiana and the surrounding areas (Eduljee, 2005-2017a)**

The mountains to the south and southwest formed a barrier for traders, therefore the Silk Road had to run through Sogdiana (Mutheseus, 1995:181).

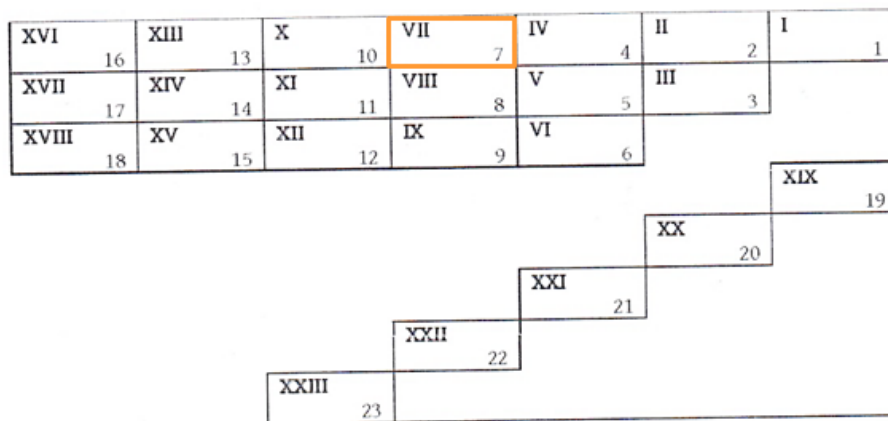
#### *7.5.1.2 Historical background*

The Sogdian culture had its roots in the age-old Andronovo culture (2000-900 BCE) (Marshak, 2003:3). It is only in the last 120 years that insight into Sogdian history, archaeology, and language became topics of interest.

The Sogdians moved further afield and were responsible for the exchange of ideas and goods between China and other parts of Asia. Their contact with other cultures resulted in their own unique culture.

During the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, conquered Sogdiana and they became part of the Persian Empire (Genito & Gricina, 2009:126). It is unclear whether they became a separate satrapy from Bactria (Lyonnet, 2020:1). The fact that the Sogdians are mentioned in some of the royal inscriptions e.g., in DB (Bisitun); DPe (one of the four inscriptions placed on the south façade of the Persepolis Terrace); DNa (one of two inscriptions on the king's tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam); and XPh (a Xerxes inscription at Persepolis) points to Sogdiana as an independent satrapy (Briant, 2002:172-173).

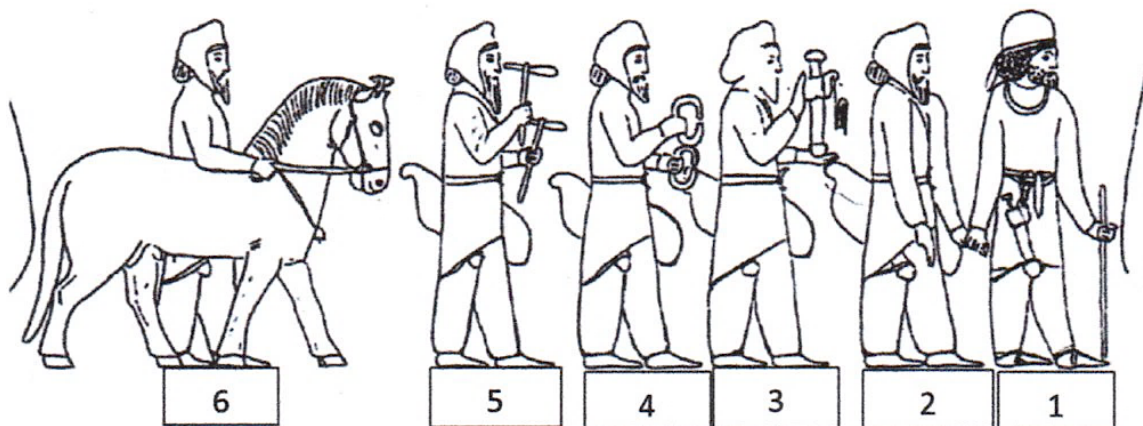
### 7.5.1.3 The position of the Sogdians, Syrians, and Cilicians (Problem Group VIII)



**Fig. 7.23 The position of Problem Group VIII in the diagram of the delegations on the eastern façade of the Apadana**

If the groups were arranged numerically in a hierarchical manner, the importance of Group VIII was dwindling (cf. Fig. 7.23).

### 7.5.1.4 Total reading of the Sogdian delegation



**Fig. 7.24 The Sogdian delegation (Koch, 1992:110)**

All the figures wear an *akinakes* under their coats (cf. Fig. 7.24). It is in full view in Number 1 but in all the other figures only the tips protrude from the lower edge of the jacket, which was an indication that they were wearing it under their jackets. In Numbers 1 and 2, it is clear that the *akinakes* was tied to the leg.

Number 1 leads Number 2 by the hand. Numbers 3 to 5 each carry their tribute in their hands and a *gorytos* on their left side. Is the presence of an *akinakes* as well as a *gorytos* an indication that they were armed and prepared for any eventuality when travelling east towards China? Number 6 brings up the rear, leading a diminutive horse. If one compares the height of the human figure with that of the horse it must have been a very small breed or a foal.



### 7.5.1.5 Total reading of the Syrian delegation

The Syrian delegation was already discussed (cf. 7.4.1). The problem with material, both visual and textual, of the Cilicians, were mentioned in the introduction where the description and photographs of Walser (1966) tallies with descriptions and photographs as used for the Syrians in this and other studies.

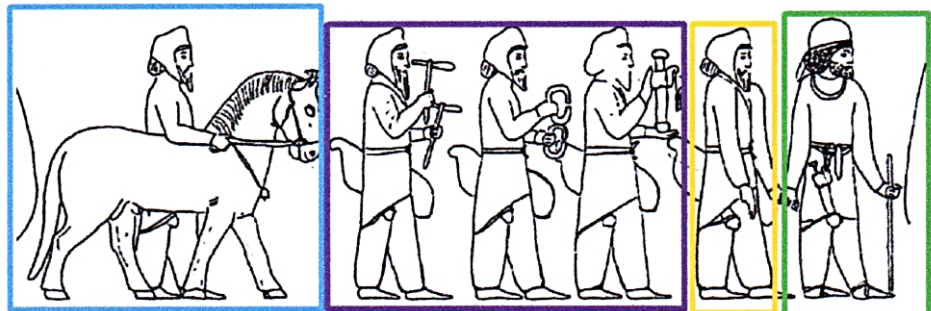
The methodology followed for the previous groups will be followed for Problem Group VIII, while using limited textual information and illustrations/photographs of the Sogdians and compare it to that of the Syrians. An attempt will be made to limit repetition as far as possible.

### *Arrangement of human figures and the animals in the designated space*

The Sogdians and Syrians are compared in Fig. 7.25.

#### Sogdians

A



#### Syrians

B





**Fig. 7.25 A comparison between the Sogdians and the Syrians in Problem Group VIII (Cilicians in Walser, 1966)**

### 7.5.1.6 Analytical reading of the Sogdians and Syrians (Cilicians)



Table 7.8 is split in the same way as was previously done.

## (a) Usher

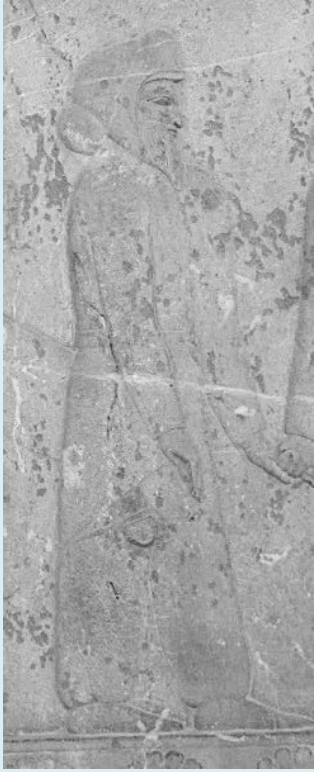

**Table 7.8 A comparison between the body parts and tribute of the Sogdians and Syrians**

Sogdian	Syrian
 <p>The usher wears a baslik with a customary strip at the back. The curly hair is visible at the back and side. He wears a short, pointed, curly beard and a moustache. A prominent earring and twisted torque around the neck serve as adornments. The nose is slightly hooked and the eye almost looks alive (Photograph from Walser, 1966:Tafel 24).</p>	


## (b) Heads

Sogdian	Syrian
 <p>The Sogdian wears a cap with a bump near the forehead and is short at the back. Straight hair is visible at the back, on the forehead, and the longish, pointed beard - a total absence of curls. The eye almost looks alive with a definite iris. The nose is straight.</p>	

## (c) Clothing







Sogdian	Syrian
	
<p>The Sogdian wears a long-sleeved, straight, knee-high coat with a belt.</p> <p>Trousers puff over the shoes.</p> <p>Visible part of the shoes is very plain.</p>	<p>The Syrian wears a short-sleeved, straight garment, almost touching the boots, and a wide sash around the waist.</p> <p>No trousers are visible.</p> <p>Short boots are tied with fancy bows.</p>

## (d) Shoes

Sogdian	Syrian
	



## (e) Sogdian tribute other than animals

Number 3	Number 4	Number 5
A short sword as a gift	Two bracelets	Two 'hammers'
 	 	 

## (f) Animal tribute



A small horse (or foal) is led by a Sogdian. The bent right arm of the leader helps to control the movement of the animal.



Detail of head shows a well-sculpted ear and eye. As an additional decoration, the forelock is tufted like a lotus blossom (Olmstead, 1959:276). No bit is visible.

### 7.5.2 Conclusion for Problem Group VIII: Sogdians, Syrians, and Cilicians

It is problematic to try and find the rationale behind the varied identifications of these three groups. The problem with Cilicia was discussed. The geographical proximity of Cilicia and Syria supplied a reason for why they can be grouped together. This left the third member of Problem Group VIII, the Sogdians, out in the cold because they were geographically too far

away from the other members of group VIII. An answer to this problem could lie in Tourovert's arrangement of all the delegations in zones, starting with those subject people closest to the centre as in Zone 1. This arrangement will bring Syria and Cilicia closer to Sogdia in Zone 3. The fact that the first two regions were almost neighbours and wear clothes to suite the relatively mild Mediterranean climate while the Sogdians wear clothes to suit a much harsher climate, is an indication of the environment in which they lived. The fact that the Sogdians carry two types of weapons, prepared them for any eventuality on their travels along the Silk Road.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF GROUPS XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XIX, AND XXI

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the rest of the Problem Groups will be analysed iconographically. The same methodology that was followed in Chapter Seven will again be implemented here i.e., the Panofsky/Keel method as well as comparisons, in an attempt to find a solution for the disparity among scholars regarding the identification of the different Problem Groups.

Some of the delegations from Problem Groups that were discussed in the previous chapter occur again in some Problem Groups to be analysed in this chapter. Where this is the case, visual images will be used in the comparative sections and the repetition of textual information will be avoided as far as possible.

The following delegations in the different Problem Groups will be analysed in this chapter: Group XII (Ionians and Lydians); Group XIII (Parthians and Bactrians); Group XV (Bactrians, Drangians/Arachosians, Parthians); Group XVII (Sogdians, Choramians, Saka haumavarga); Group XIX (Skudarians, Thracians, Saka Paradrya); and Group XXI (Drangians, tribe of Saka, Median tribe, Carians).

#### 8.2 PROBLEM GROUP XII: IONIANS AND LYDIANS

The focus in this Group (cf. Fig. 8.1) will be on the Ionians and mainly visual images of the Lydians (discussed in Chapter Seven) will be used in the comparison.

##### 8.2.1 Ionians

In Table 8.1, it is quite clear that there is no consensus among scholars about the identification of the delegation carved in space XII of the *Apadana Reliefs*. Are they Ionians or Lydians? Therefore, some of the aspects of the Lydians, that were discussed and analysed in the previous chapter, will now be used in an attempt to clarify the identification problem.

**Table 8.1 Identification of Problem Group XII by nine different scholars**

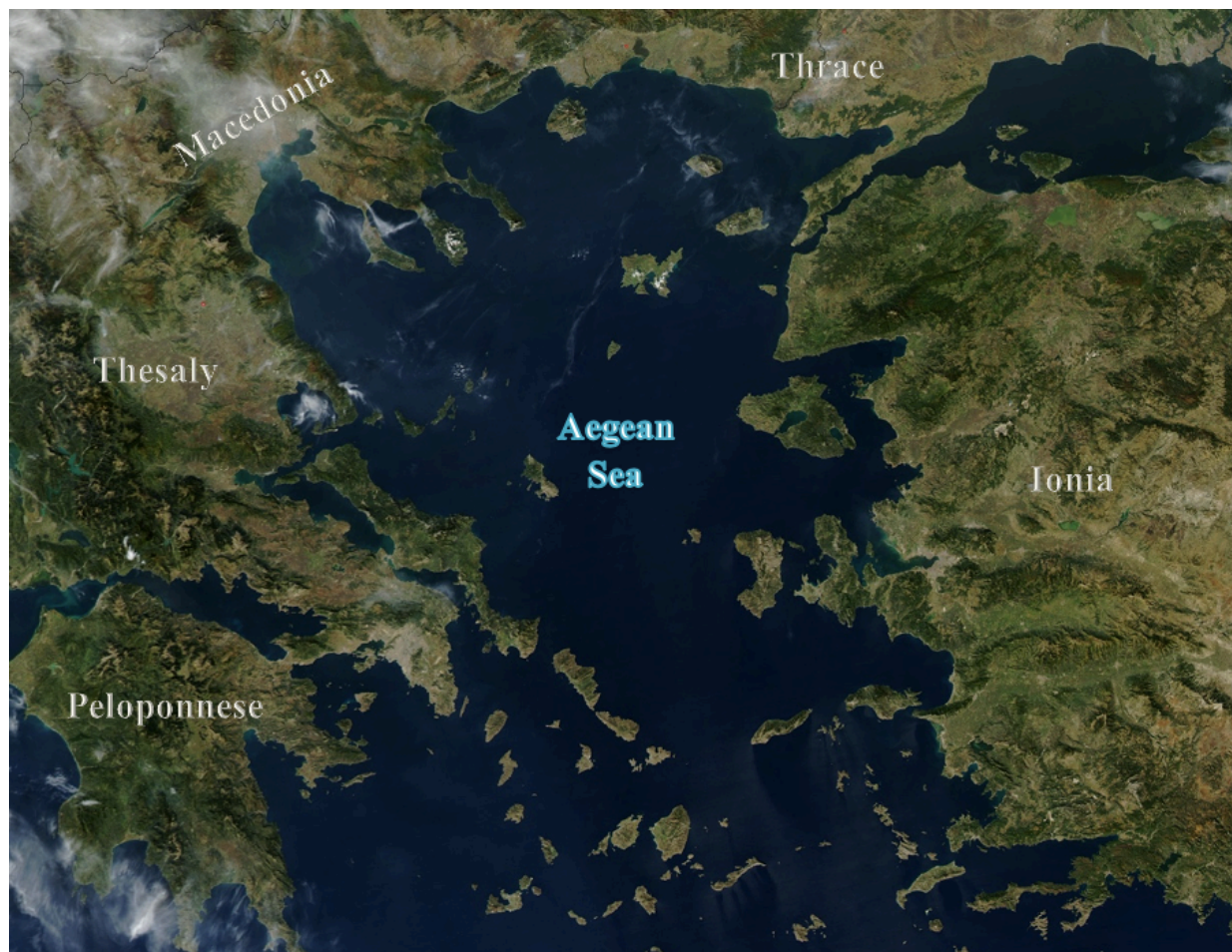
	XII
Schmidt 1953	Ionians
Barnett 1957	Ionians

Walser 1966	Lydians
Herzfeld 1968	Lydians
Wilber 1969	Ionians
Dandamaev et al. 1994	Ionians
Koch 2001	Ionians
Wieshöfer 2009	Lydians
Shahbazi 2011	Ionians

According to Herodotus (III, 90-94), the satrapy Ionia included Ionia proper, Aeolia, Cara, Lycia, and Pamphylia. Achaemenid inscriptions such as the *Bisitun Inscription* of Darius I also mention two different Ionian groups – ‘Ionians who dwell by the sea’ (the islands?) and ‘Ionians who dwell beyond the sea’ (not necessarily mainland Greece?) [Dandamaev et al., 1994:183].

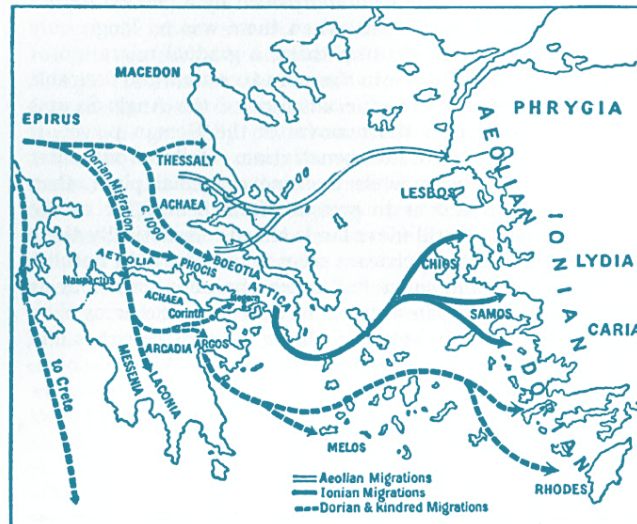
#### 8.2.1.1 Geographical location

Ionia had an intricate coastline, and a great area was occupied by mountains (cf. Map 8.1). These mountains do not attain a height of more than 1200 m.



Map 8.1 Ionia and surroundings (Adapted from NASA visible earth, 2002)

There were quite a number of Greek migrations eastward, towards the west coast of Anatolia (Asia Minor). The Ionians were among these groups and settled here along the west coast as well as on a number of Aegean islands off the coast, e.g., Samos and Chios during the Archaic Period (600-480 BCE) (cf. Map 8.2).



**Map 8.2 Illustration of migrations of groups from Greece to western Anatolia**  
(Robinson, 1970:26)

*Neighbouring areas.* Ionia and Lydia were fairly close neighbours – approximately 100 km apart, if that much (cf. Map 8.3).<sup>91</sup> One would expect some cultural influences between these groups.



**Map 8.3 Geographical distribution of Ionia and Lydia in Problem Group XII**

<sup>91</sup>In Map 8.3 the details and distances were taken from Map 6.1.

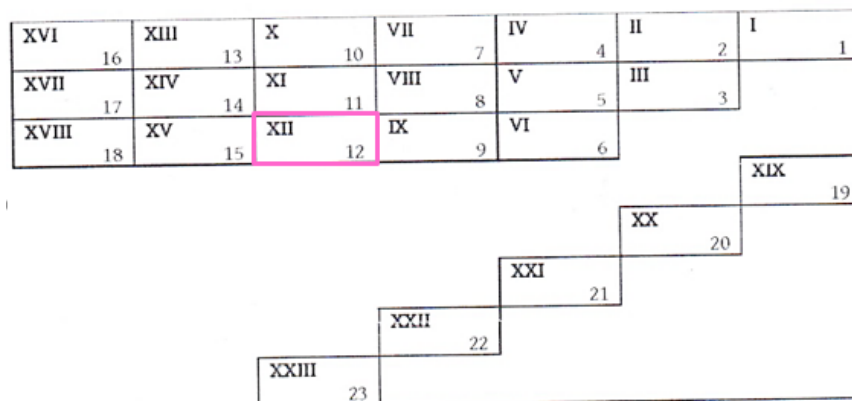
### 8.2.1.2 Historical background

The colonisation of Ionia took place during Mycenaean times as early as 1400 BCE. During the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, important changes occurred in Ionia when the Assyrians conquered the sea-trading Phoenicians (Gropp, 2009:344). The Ionians now became the leading sea traders.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the flourishing Ionians revolted against the Persians (Huart, 1972:57) who were becoming more and more powerful.

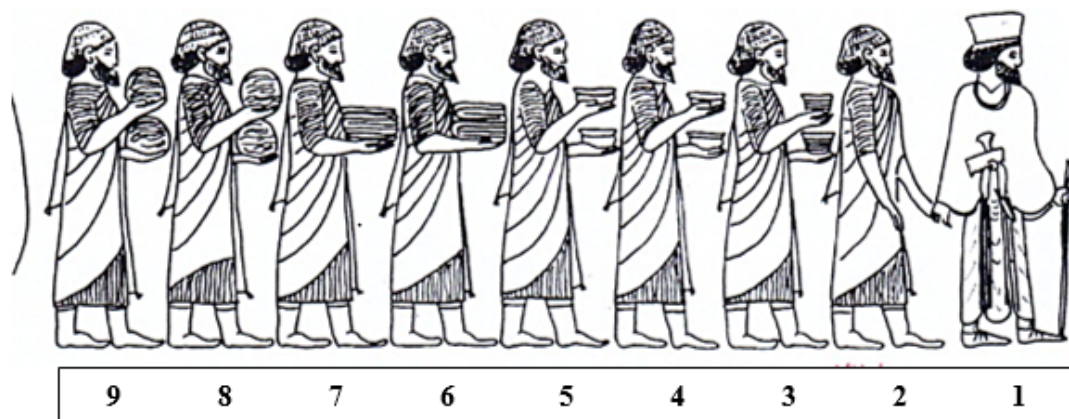
By the time Darius I became king, the Persian Empire was well-established. Ionia was one of the flourishing satrapies. Darius used many of the skilled Ionians in his building projects (Mallowan, 1955:143) – and certainly for the reliefs on the Apadana at Persepolis.

### 8.2.1.3 The position of the Ionians and Lydians in the procession



**Fig. 8.1.** The position of Problem Group XII in the diagram of the delegations on the reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadana (Tourovers, 200:347).

### 8.2.1.4 Total reading of the Ionian delegation

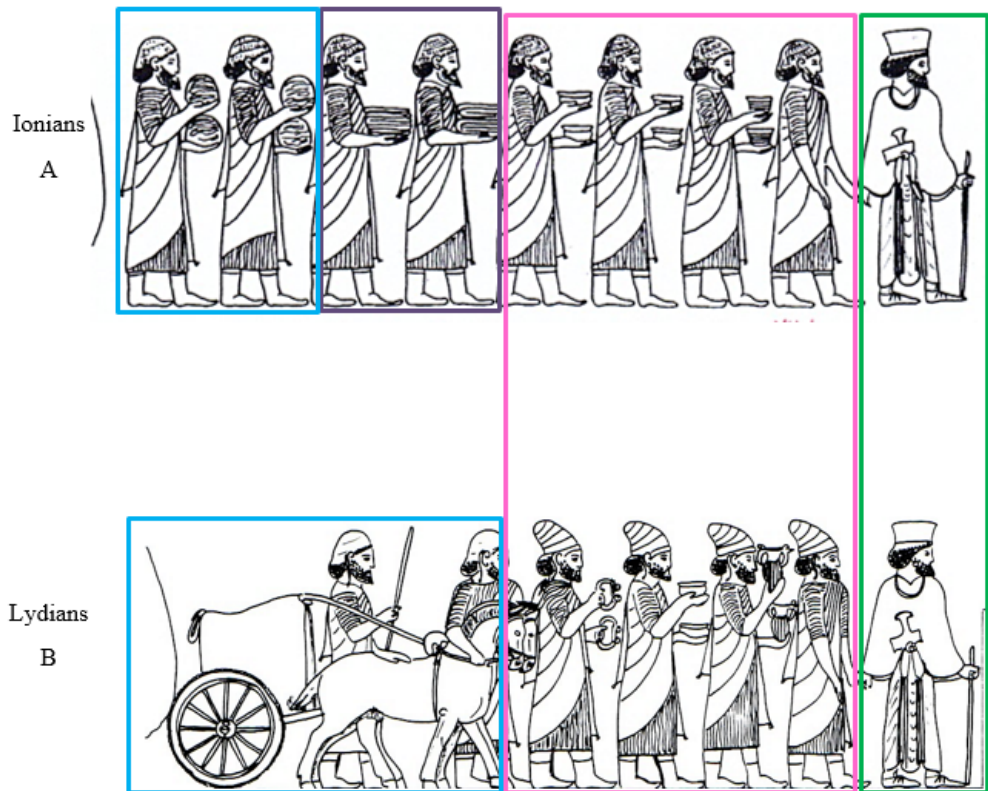


**Fig. 8.2** The Ionian delegation (Koch, 1992:112)

Number 1 is dressed in a Persian robe and his torso is turned sideways while the rest of the body faces forward. Number 1 holds the left hand of Number 2 (the first of the delegation) in



his right hand. Numbers 3, 4, and 5 carry a bowl in each hand. Numbers 6 and 7 carry folded fabric (or woven wool?) and Numbers 8 and 9 carry large skeins of wool(?).<sup>92</sup> The tribute/gift bearers all wear similar robes and footwear. Their headdress, hair, and beards are also the same. There is no animal gift in this delegation (cf. Fig. 8.2). The Ionians and Lydians are compared below (cf. Fig. 8.3; Table 8.2).



**Fig. 8.3 The two delegations in Problem Group XII to show some similarities and differences in their arrangement, clothing, and tribute**

*Similarities in the ushers of the two groups*

- (i) Crown-like headdress.
- (ii) The ushers wear Persian robes and cloaks over the shoulders.
- (iii) An *akinakes* is tucked into the belt.
- (iv) Shoes are tied with three straps.

<sup>92</sup> It is impossible to tell what material was used to form the balls with their distinct wavy lines, carried by Numbers 8 and 9 in this group. There are many suggestions by scholars that these gifts were balls of wool. In a recent lecture Roaf (2021) voiced an objection to 'balls of wool' as the easy way out. Several options like balls spun with gold thread that would make these gifts more valuable and suited for a king (although something like this would have been very fragile) were discussed. Roaf then put forward a new hypothesis: the balls consisted of gold thread wound around a dense silk core. This then would have been a suitable and precious gift for the ruler.



- (v) The left hand holds a sceptre while the right hand clasps the left hand of the leader of the delegation.

*Similarities in groups A and B*

- (i) Similar garments – even down to the visible tassels of the shawls at the front and the back.
- (ii) All the members of the delegations wear the same short boots with slightly upturned toes.
- (iii) Number four in each delegation carry two bowls.

*Differences between the Ionians and the Lydians*



- (i) In the Ionians there are eight delegates and in the Lydians only six.
- (ii) There is no distinctive headdress in the Ionians while two types of headdresses occur in the Lydians.
- (iii) The gifts of the Ionians consist mainly of fabric and wool (?). Fabric items are absent from the gifts of the Lydians.
- (iv) No animals are present in the Ionian delegation, but two diminutive horses are pulling a chariot in the Lydian delegation.

*8.2.1.5 Analytical reading of the two groups*

(a) Ushers

Table 8.2 will be split so as to enable a short discussion of the comparison(s) between the two delegations in Problem Group XII.

**Table 8.2 Comparison between certain details in Problem Group XII**

Ionian	Lydian
	

At first glance, the similarities in the depiction of the heads of the ushers look alike. Even the high, V-shaped neckline of the robe and the torque around the neck is the same. In the Lydian, the twists in the torque are clearly visible. This characteristic of the torque could also be true in the adornment of the Ionian but due to the weathered state of the material, it was impossible to discern clear twists. On closer examination, the only real visual difference is the presence of the earring in the Lydian. The dark face of the Lydian is probably only the result of the polished, dark grey stone (cf. Figs. 8.4 & 8.5).

*The two delegations in Problem Group XII*



**Fig. 8.4 The Ionian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel XIX)**

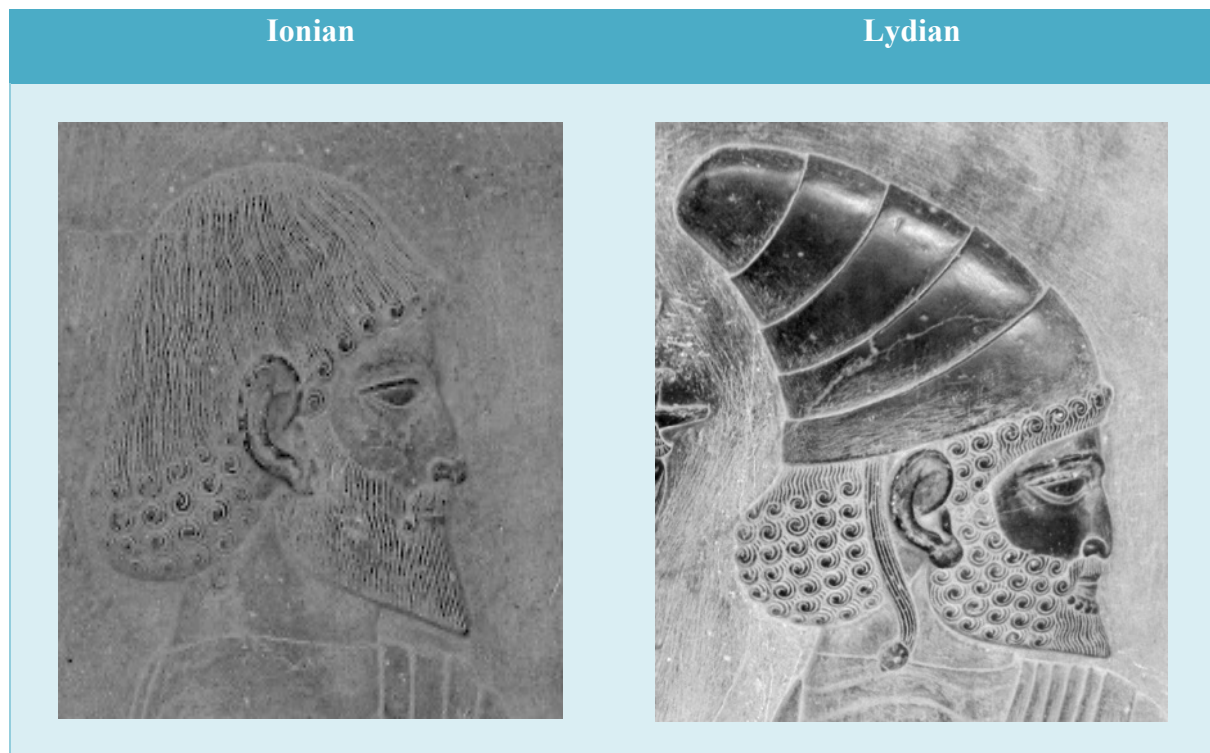


**Fig. 8.5 The Lydian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel XIX)**

*A comparative iconographic analysis of the body parts of the two different delegations in Problem Group XII*

Detail of the Lydians was already discussed in Chapter Seven and will only be used here to point out certain differences between the two delegations.

### (b) Heads



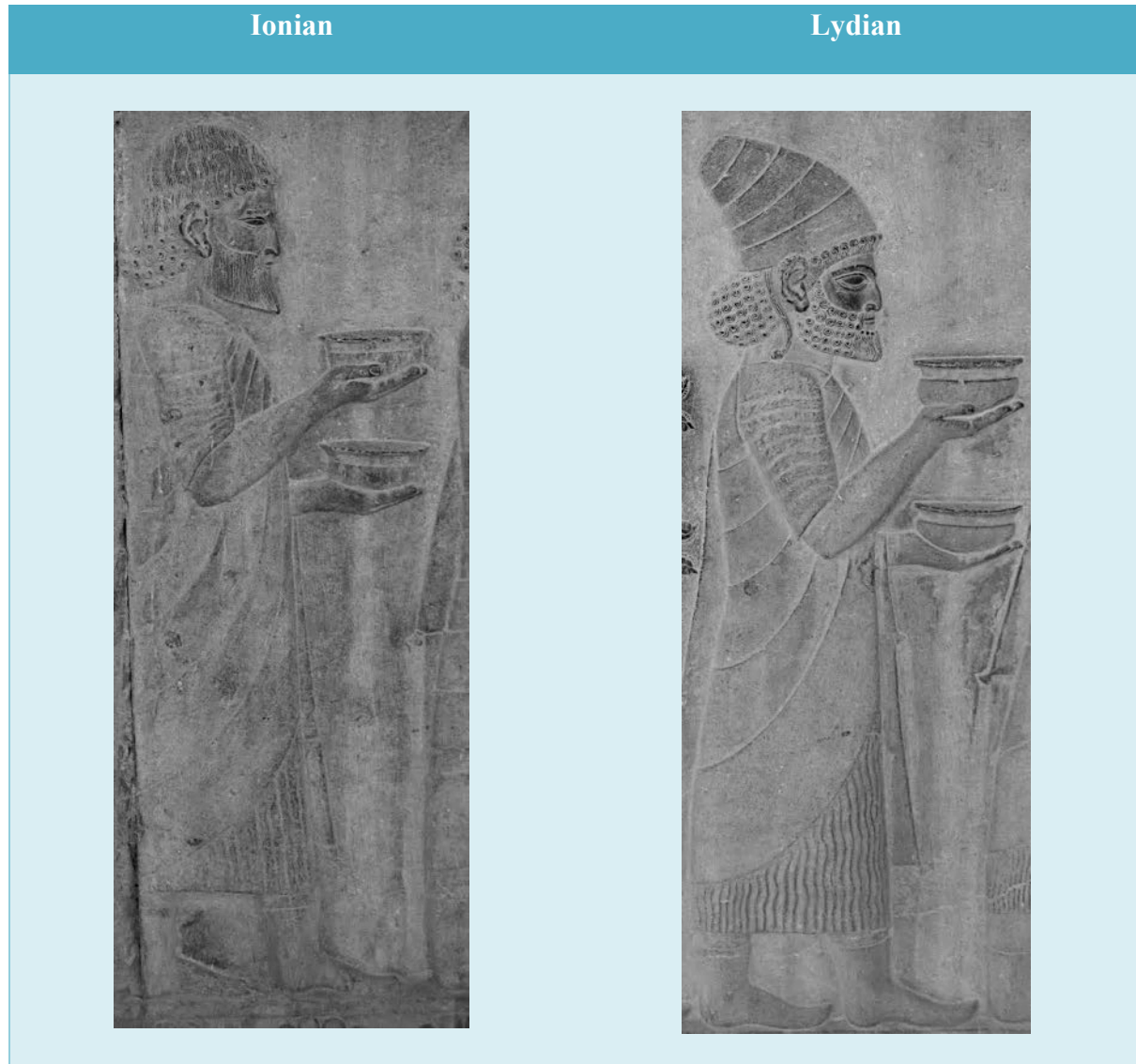
The absence of a headdress in the Ionian contrasts sharply with the conspicuous and ornate headdress of the Lydian delegate. The straight hair of the Ionian ends in four rows of curls at the back and a single row on the forehead. In the Lydian, straight hair is visible between the headdress and the bunch of curls at the back. On the forehead of the Lydian, one also finds a single row of curls, but the hair terminates in a short fringe of straight hair.

A sharp, pointed beard of straight hair is present in the Ionian, whereas the beard of the Lydian is shorter and less pointed and straight hair is present in the beard below the row of curls along the lower lip.

### (c) Clothing

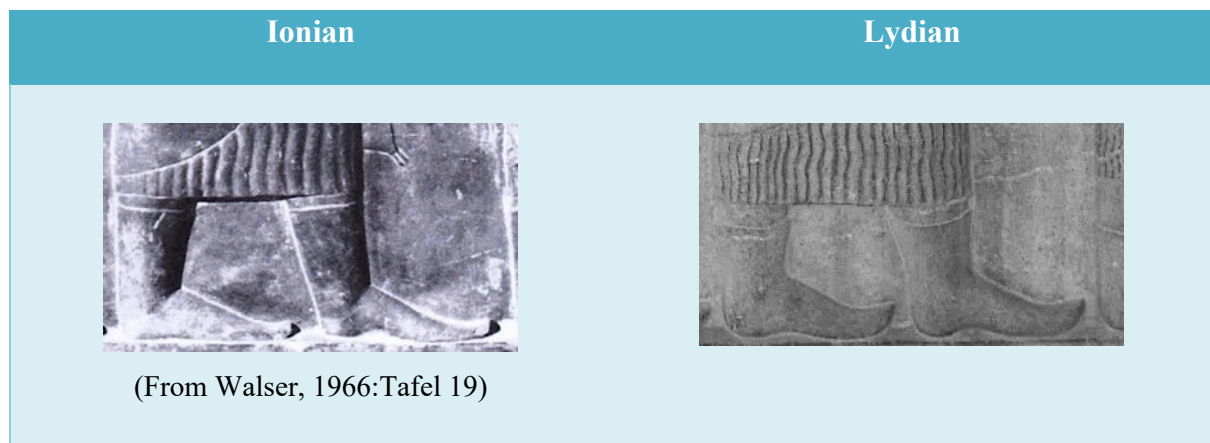
The garments are identical. Both have the same neckline of the robe and folds over the left shoulder.










The long, ribbed robe of wool(?) is covered by a pleated coat. Do the short, pleated sleeves belong to the coat or the robe? A shawl with tassels over the left shoulder is also visible.

(d) Shoes



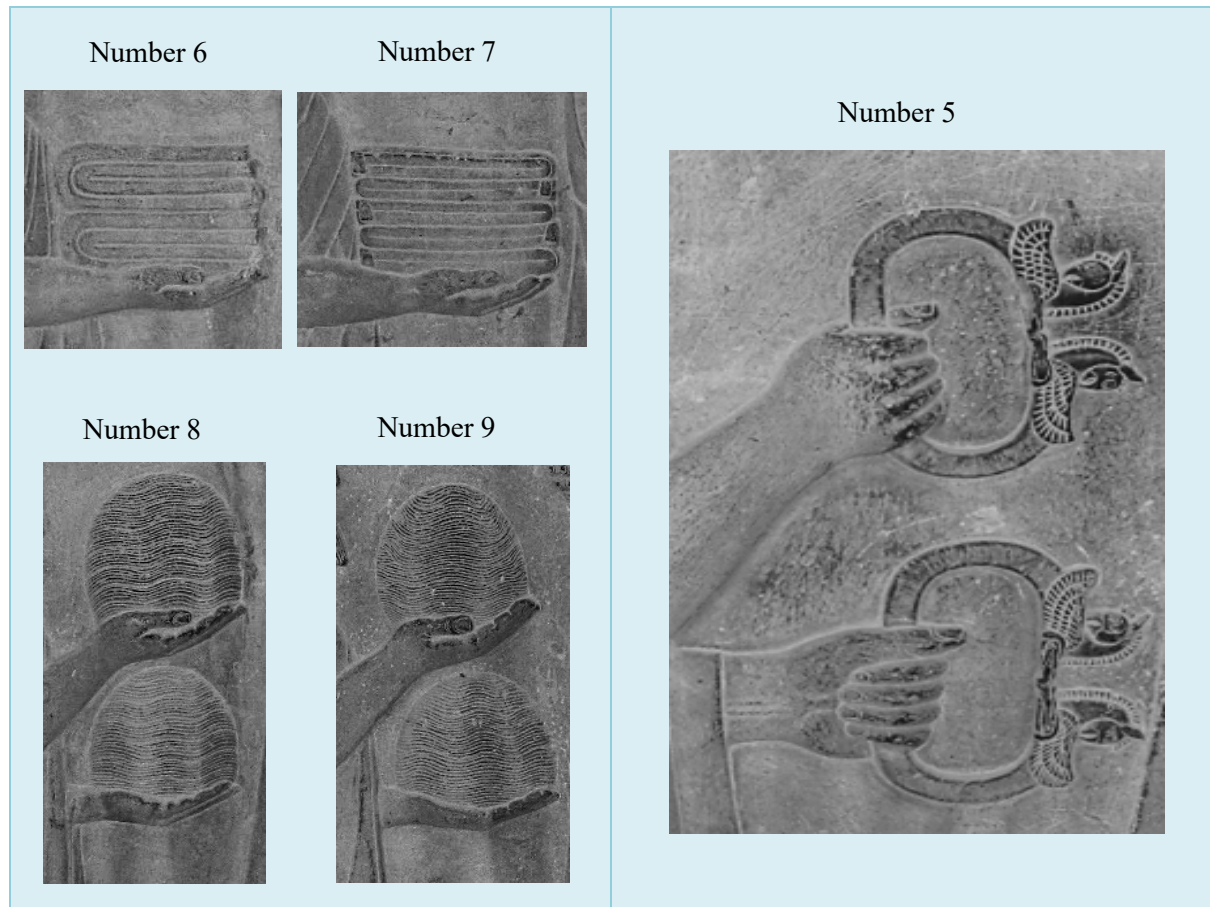
In both cases, short boots with slightly turned-up toes are depicted. The garment almost touches the boots.

(e) Tribute other than animals

Bowls	
Ionian	Lydian (cf. Table 7.6)
Number 3	Number 3
	
Number 4	Number 4
	
Number 5	
	




Delegate Number 3 of the Ionians carries two bowls that differ in shape and size from the bowls carried by Numbers 4 and 5, which appeared to be very similar in shape and size. The bowls carried by the Lydian (cf. Number 4) almost match the bowls carried by Numbers 4 and 5 of the Ionians. One must bear in mind that Ionia and Lydia were geographical neighbours and so there were probably intercultural exchanges. There is even a possibility that they could have been manufactured by the same people or were copied.



Numbers 6 and 7 in the Ionian delegation both carry folded fabric (wool?) while both Numbers 8 and 9 carry skeins of wool. Thus, there is a duplication of gifts. This is not the case in the Lydian delegation. In their case, they showcase a variety of finely crafted gifts as discussed in the previous chapter (cf. Table 7.6).

## (f) Tribute including animals

Ionian	Lydian
<p><b>No animals</b></p>	 <p>Numbers 6 and 7 with two horses pulling a chariot (cf. Table 7.6)</p>

**8.2.2 Conclusion for Problem Group XII: Ionians and Lydians**

In this Problem Group, more than half of the scholars identified the delegation as Ionians. They were identified as Lydians by the remainder of the scholars. This was understandable. Not only were these two groups geographical neighbours which could have resulted in cross-cultural influences, but there are also remarkable similarities in their garments and boots.

One can understand the hesitation in the identification process of the Ionians and the Lydians. At first glance, similarities present form an almost uniform picture of the two groups of delegates. However, on closer examination, there are definite differences that distinguish the Ionians from the Lydians. This lies in their headdress, or the absence thereof, and the tribute they carry.

The absence of animals in the Ionian delegation allowed for two more tribute bearing human figures to be included within the designated space.

**8.3 PROBLEM GROUP XIII: BACTRIANS AND PARTHIANS**

The Parthians were already described and analysed in the previous chapter (cf. 7.2.1). The relevant aspects of that section will be used in the comparison with the Bactrians in Problem Group XIII. It is not clear what the reasons for the different identifications of the groups by the different scholars in the current study are (cf. Table 8.3).

**Table 8.3 Identification of Problem Group XIII by nine different scholars**

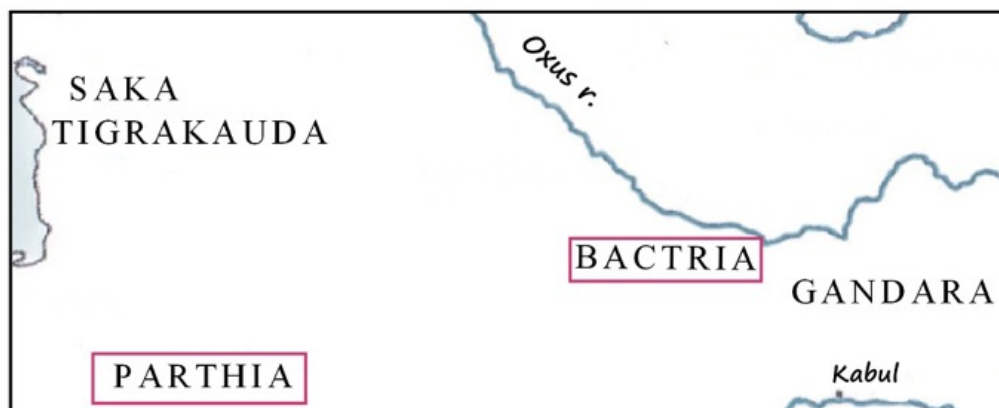
	XIII
Schmidt 1953	Parthians
Barnett 1957	Parthians
Walser 1966	Parthians
Herzfeld 1968	Parthians
Wilber 1969	Parthians
Dandamaev et al. 1994	Parthians
Koch 2001	Bactrians
Wiesehöfer 2009	Parthians
Shahbazi 2011	Bactrians

### 8.3.1 Bactrians

Bactria, an east Iranian ‘kingdom’, is mentioned in some of the royal inscriptions of Darius (e.g., DB, DPe, DNa) as well as in the royal inscriptions of Xerxes (e.g., the *Daiva Inscription* - XPh) (Walser, 1966:38). Unfortunately, Bactra, the capital of Bactria, lies deeply buried under the present-day Balk and cannot be excavated (Leriche & Grenet, 2011).

Not only were the Bactrians skilled metal craftsmen, but they were already utilising a well-developed irrigation system and produced agricultural products. One can almost see it as the ‘bread-basket’ of Bactria. The Bactrians were also famous for their fierce fighting as warriors and they made an important contribution to the Persian army (Leriche & Grenet, 2011). The Bactrians also prided themselves in the establishment of an ancient religion founded by the prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster) (Basirov, 2010:81; Soudavar, 2010:111-112).

#### 8.3.1.1 Geographical location

**Map 8.4 Geographical distribution of Parthia and Bactria in Problem Group XIII**

Bordering regions were Gandara to the southeast and Sogdia, north of the Oxus river (cf. Map 8.4). Although Parthia and Bactria were both in the eastern part of Persia and had various common denominators, they were approximately 1000 km apart.

Bactria stretched from the Oxus River (Amu Darya) to the north into what is today Tajikistan. Parts of Bactria were also located in modern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan (Gropp, 2009:334). The commanding position of the royal road to India, that ran through Bactria, resulted in east-west trade relations.



**Map 8.5 Topography of Bactria (Bakhdi/Balkh) and the neighbouring areas (Eduljee 2005-2017b)**

Bactria was indeed an area of contrasts (cf. Map 8.5). To the south, the mountains of the Hindu Kush formed a border of Bactria. The east-west zone consisted of fertile alluvial plains where farmers produced wheat and barley since ancient times (cf. Chapter Two). To the northwest, a hot desert also formed part of Bactria. Archaeological evidence showed big oasis communities (Togaev, 2018).

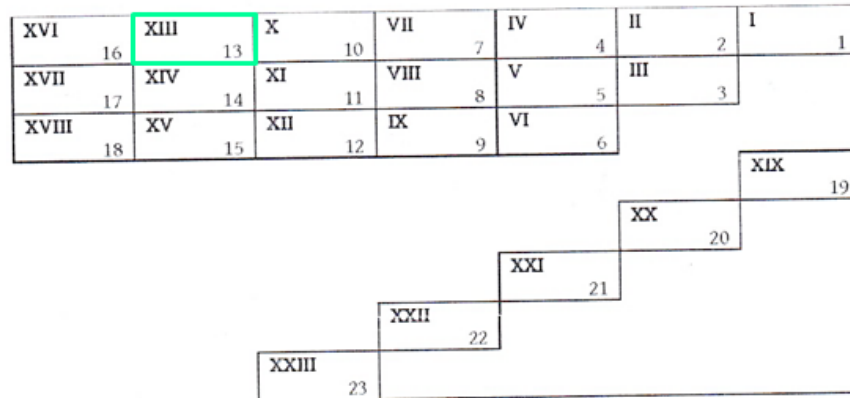
### *8.3.1.2 Historical background*

The region in which Bactria was situated played a major role in Central Asian history. Cyrus, the king of Persia, annexed Bactria in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. This was the result of a union of crowns and not a conquest. Bactria, together with Margiana, now became a satrapy of Persia but the satrap was always a kinsman of the king. An administrative system was not introduced,



and the real power was in the hands of the nobles. The opulence of the Oxus Treasure<sup>93</sup> attested not only the wealth of Bactria but also their exceptional artistic ability.

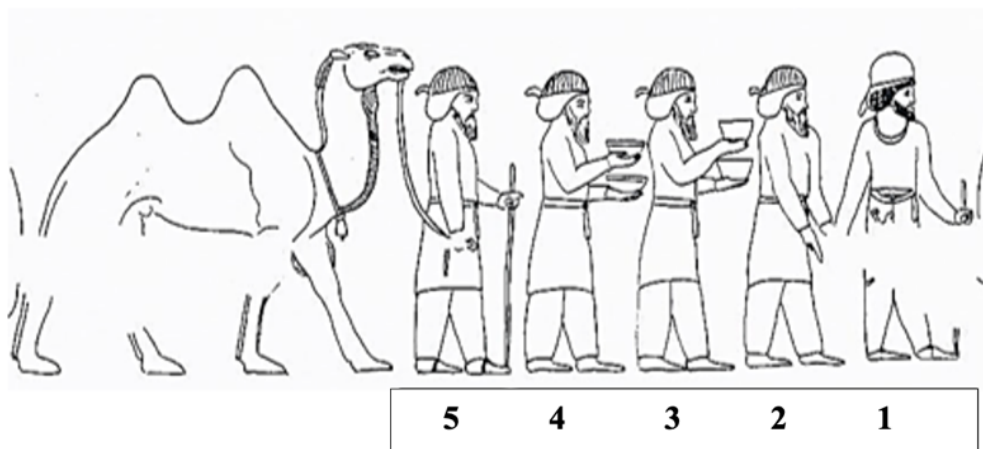
### 8.3.1.3 The position of Problem Group XIII in the procession



**Fig. 8.6. The position of Problem Group XIII in the Apadana procession as indicated in the diagram of Touroverts (2008:347)**

Numerically, this group, as indicated by the coloured line (cf. Fig. 8.6), occurs about halfway in the procession. Is this an indication of its importance or a lack thereof?

### 8.3.1.4 Total reading of the Bactrian delegation



**Fig. 8.7 The Bactrian delegation (Koch, 1992:104)**

Although this relief is severely damaged, one can still get an idea of the depiction of the Bactrians as illustrated by Koch (1992:104). Number 1, the usher, is dressed in Median dress. He is leading Number 2, the delegation's leader, by the hand. Although the hands are missing, the position of the arms indicates the action. Number 3 is carrying fairly deep bowls in his two hands, while Number 4 also carries two bowls, although they are shallower. Number 5, the last

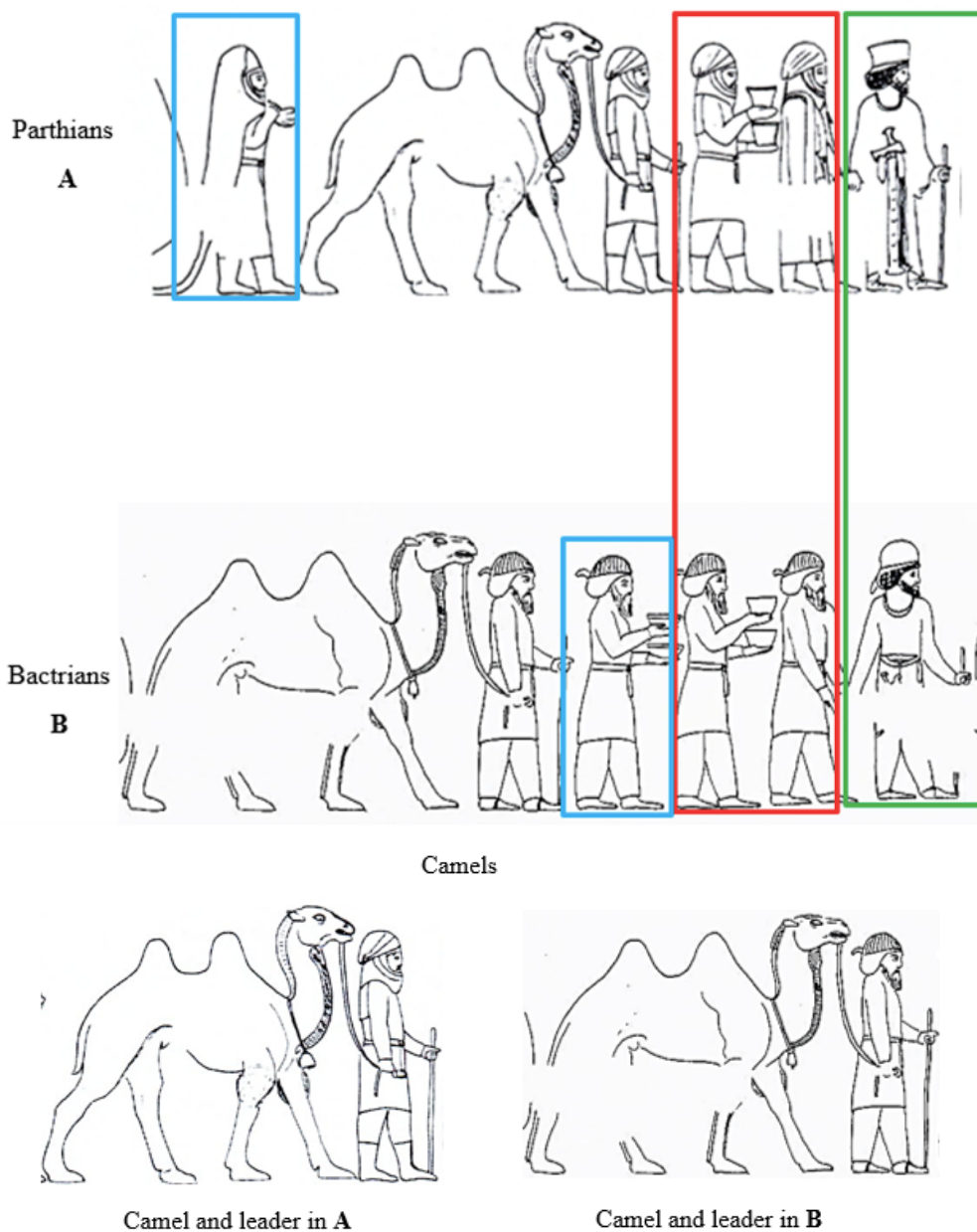
<sup>93</sup> One gets an idea of the extent and wealth of the Oxus Treasure in the correspondence between Cunningham and Franks in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A list called 'Oxus-Relic' gives an idea of the extent and variety of the objects that were discovered (Curtis, 2004:302-303).



human figure, is leading a two-humped Bactrian camel with a bell tied around his neck. The back of a kneepad on the left front leg is visible (cf. Fig. 8.7).

### 8.3.2 Parthians

The Parthians were discussed and illustrated in the previous chapter (cf. 7.2.1). The relevant information supplied by this group will be used in this chapter. The aim is to find sufficient similarities that will allow the Parthians to be grouped with the Bactrians (Figs. 8.8; 8.10.1 & 8.10.2).



**Fig. 8.8 The two delegations in Problem Group XIII to show some similarities and differences in their arrangement, clothing, and gifts**

*Similarities in the two delegations*

- (i) An usher leads each group and holds the hand of the leader of the delegation.
- (ii) There is an usher and four members in each delegation.
- (iii) They are all wearing Median dress.
- (iv) A Bactrian camel is among the tribute they brought.

*Differences in the two delegations*

- (i) The usher of the Parthians is clothed in Persian dress while the Bactrian usher wears a Median outfit.
- (ii) The bowls with different shapes are carried by Number 3.
- (iii) Number 4 of the Parthians leads a Bactrian camel while Number 4 of the Bactrians also carries two bowls but of a different shape.
- (iv) A camel is led by Number 4 in the Parthian delegation, while the camel is led by Number 5 of the Bactrians.
- (v) The fifth human figure in the Parthian delegation appears behind the camel. In the Bactrians, all the human figures are in front of the camel.

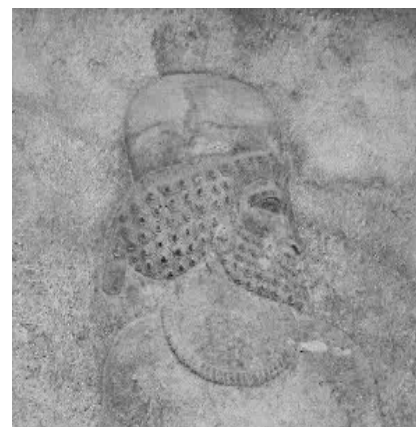
There are slight differences in the shape of the humps, neck, and heads of the camels.<sup>94</sup>

*8.3.2.1 Analytical reading of the two delegations in Problem Group XIII*

In the comparison, the visual material of the Parthians was used to highlight similarities and/or differences. Repetition of the texts on the Parthians will be restricted since they were fully analysed in Chapter Seven.

*(a) Ushers*

**Fig. 8.9.1 Parthian**

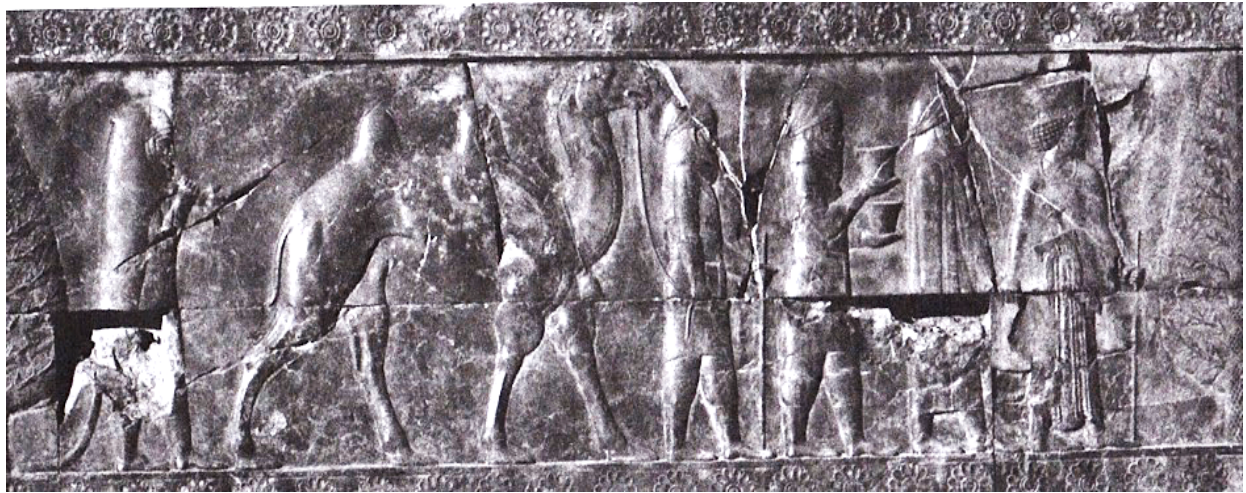


**Fig. 8.9.2 Bactrian**

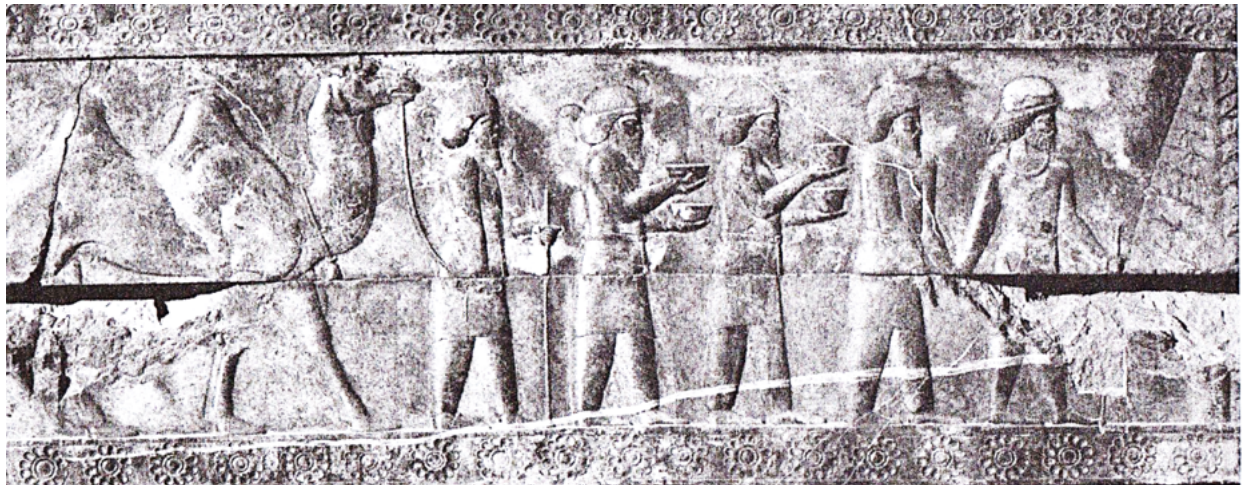
<sup>94</sup> This was probably due to renditions of different artists.



*The two delegations in Problem Group XIII*



**Fig. 8.10.1 The Parthian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel XIV)**






**Fig. 8.10.2 The Bactrian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel XII)**

*A comparative analysis of the body parts and gifts in the two delegations in Problem Group XIII*

Table 8.4 will be split so as to enable a short discussion of the comparison(s) between the two delegations in Problem Group XIII.

(b) Heads

Table 8.4 Comparison between certain details in the Problem Group XIII

Parthian	Bactrian
	 

In contrast to the covered head and chin of the Parthian, the head of the Bactrian is only partially covered with the hair in a bundle at the back. The hair cover ends in a piece of material with a distinct shape. The visible hair on the head and the beard is straight and no hair is visible on the forehead. The end of the beard is trimmed in a straight line. A very ornate earring is attached to the earlobe.

(c) Clothing

They both wear Median dress. The Parthian wears mid-calf boots in contrast to the low footwear of the Bactrian.



Parthian



(Walser, 1966: Tafel XIV)

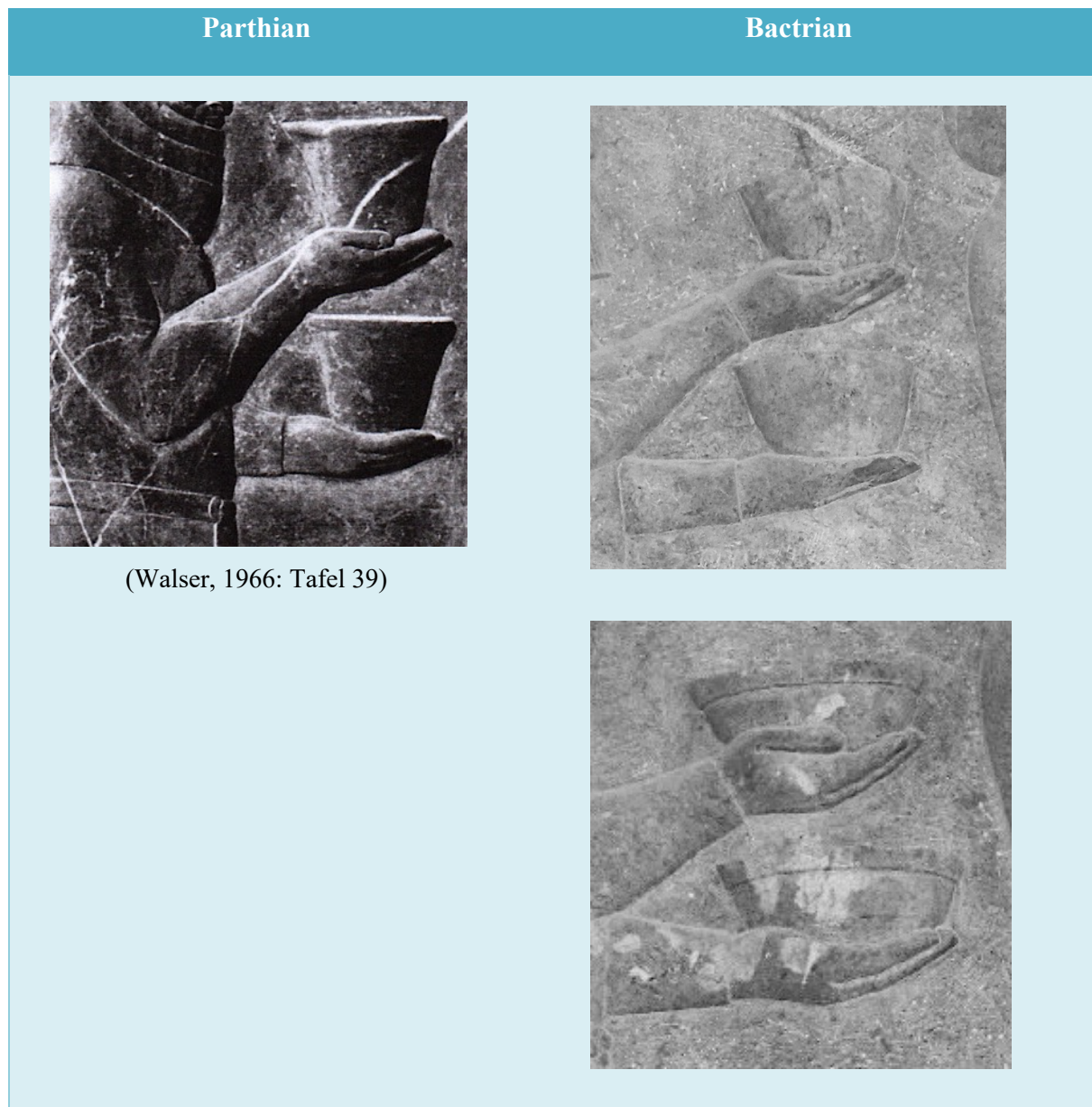
Bactrian



(Walser, 1966: Tafel XII)



(d) Tribute other than animals. Bowls of different shapes.



(e) Animal tribute

In Fig. 8.8, both the Parthians and the Bactrians bring a Bactrian camel, and the last Parthian also carries a feline skin.

### 8.3.3 Conclusion

In the two delegations of Problem Group XII, the differences outnumber the similarities by far. This places a question mark on the validity of the identification and grouping together of the different delegations in Problem Group XIII.

#### 8.4 PROBLEM GROUP XV: BACTRIANS, PARTHIANS, AND ARACHOSIANS/DRANGIANS

From the table below, it is clear that there is no consensus on the identification of the different delegations. In this case, however, nine of the eleven scholars who are cited identified them as Bactrians, one as Parthians, and one as Drangians/Arachosians.

**Table 8.5 Identification of Problem Group XV by nine different scholars**

	XV
Schmidt 1953	Bactrians
Barnett 1957	Bactrians
Walser 1966	Bactrians
Herzfeld 1968	Bactrians
Wilber 1969	Bactrians
Dandamaev et al. 1994	Bactrians
Koch 2001	Drangians/Arachosians
Wiesehöfer 2009	Bactrians
Shahbazi 2011	Parthians

##### 8.4.1 Bactrians, Parthians and Arachosians

All these groups were already discussed previously: Bactrians in 8.3.1, Parthians in 7.2.1 and 8.3.2, and the Arachosians/Drangians in 7.2.3.

##### 8.4.1.1 Geographical location












**Map 8.6 Locations of Bactria, Parthia, Arachosia, and Drangiana**

From the map (cf. Map 8.6), it is clear that the delegations in Problem Group XV came from the south-eastern part of the empire.

Arachosia and Drangiana, who were grouped together, appear to be neighbours. According to the scale on Map 6.1, approximately they were approximately 500 km apart. The distance between Drangiana and Parthia was approximately 500 km, between Parthia and Bactria 1 000 km, and between Bactria and Arachosia 750 km.

#### 8.4.1.2 Total and analytical readings

**Table 8.6 Differences in the headdresses and lower parts of the body in the delegations of Problem Group XV**

	Parthian	Bactrian	Arachosian/Drangian
<b>Heads</b>			
			
<b>Lower body parts</b>			

These readings were already done for the delegates in this Problem Group (cf. 7.2.1 and 8.3.1).

#### 8.4.2 Conclusion

They cannot be identified as members of the same Problem Group XV when they are represented so differently.

#### 8.5 PROBLEM GROUP XVII: SOGDIAANS, CHORASMIANS, AND SAKA HAUMVARGA

The Sogdians were already discussed in Problem Group VIII (cf. 7.5.1). Five of the scholars in cited Table 8.7, identified the members in this group as Sogdians while three of the scholars identified them as Chorasmians. The remaining scholar's identification was the Saka haumavarga. The lack of visual material as well as hardly any descriptions in ancient as well as modern textual material poses a problem when trying to implement the same methodology used in the foregoing Problem Groups and the delegations therein (cf. Fig. 8.11).

**Table 8.7 Identification of Problem Group XVII by nine different scholars**

	XVII
Schmidt 1953	Sogdians
Barnett 1957	Choramians
Walser 1966	Sogdians
Herzfeld 1968	Sogdians
Wilber 1969	Choramians
Dandamaev et al. 1994	Choramians
Koch 2001	Sogdians
Wiesehöfer 2009	Sogdians
Shahbazi 2011	Saka haumavarga

The Sogdians were discussed under Problem Group VIII in 7.5.

##### 8.5.1 Chorasmians

The Chorasmians, Sogdians, and Saka were aware of their common origin as well as the close connection between their intellectual and material cultures. Both their intellectual and material culture intensified during Achaemenid times (Dandamaev & Lukonin, 1989:298). Written sources from Chorasmia itself were virtually non-existent because it was a semi-nomadic, but organised society which was influenced by the Persians (Minardi, 2015:199).<sup>95</sup>

Their name was first mentioned in the *Avesta* and *Bisitun Inscriptions* (cf. 7.2).

<sup>95</sup> Minardi (2015), for example, used pottery objects and crafts to show external Persian influences.

One of the important accomplishments of the Chorasmians in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, was the digging of a large canal, with a length of 10-15 km, for irrigation. They also introduced mudbrick constructions and made use of a potter's wheel.

#### 8.5.1.1 Geographical location



**Map 8.7 Distribution of Chorasmia, Sogdiana and the Saka haumavarga**

Ancient Achaemenid Chorasmia was located in Northern Central Asia, south of the Aral Sea, (Minardi, 2015; cf. Maps 8.7; 8.8.1 & 8.8.2). To the east was the inhospitable Ustjurt Plateau. The boundaries varied from time to time. Some scholars regarded Chorasmia as a remote area but Minardi (2015) argues that Chorasmia was open to interaction, influences, and exchanges.



**Map 8.8.1 Satellite imagery of the Aral Sea and the Khwarazm Oasis (Adapted from NASA visible earth, 2003)**



In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Chorasmia would have spread over Uzbekistan and included smaller areas of Turkmenistan and Kazakstan (cf. Map 8.5.2). The map also shows how far east it reached.



**Map 8.8.2 Chorasmia and its surroundings (Briant, 2002:744)**

#### 8.5.1.2 Historical background

The Chorasmians had a long, continuous history of relations and exchange. This contributed to the development of their own culture. During the Achaemenid Period, the Chorasmian state ‘acted as a bridge with other steppe entities’ (Minardi, 2015:129).

Chorasmia was one of several suggestions for the birthplace of Zarathustra (Zoroaster).

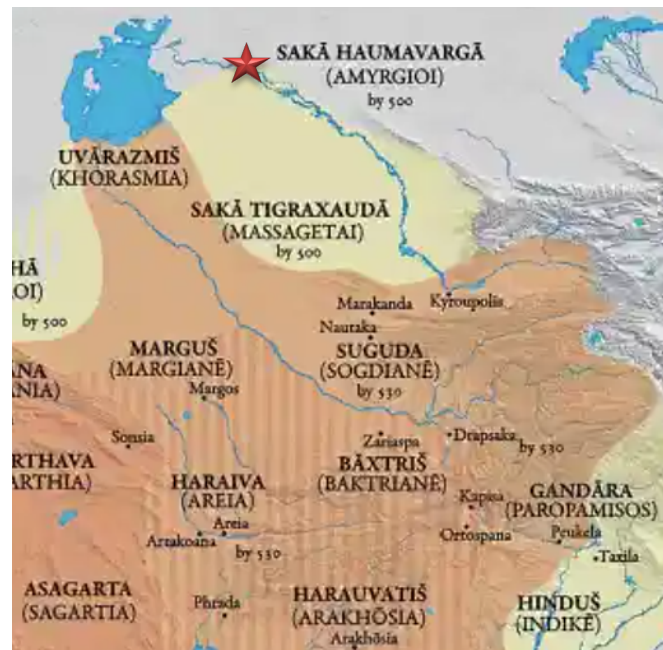
#### 8.5.2 Saka haumavarga

Saka haumavarga was only one tribe of Saka and belonged to nomads of Aryan stock (Huart, 1972:55). Hauma<sup>96</sup> was a medicinal and health-giving plant extract made from a plant that grew in the mountains. If the *Rigveda* is read correctly, hauma is more than a medicinal extract. It appears that it was also psychotropic in nature. The Saka haumavarga practised hauma-drinking (Schmitt, 2012)

<sup>96</sup> *Hauma* can be interpreted as the *soma* of the *Rigveda* (Mahdihassan, 1989:86).

### 8.5.2.1 Geographical location

The homeland of the Saka haumavarga was probably in the region between the Caspian Sea and beyond the Oxus River, not too far from the Sogdians and the Bactrians (cf. Map 8.9).

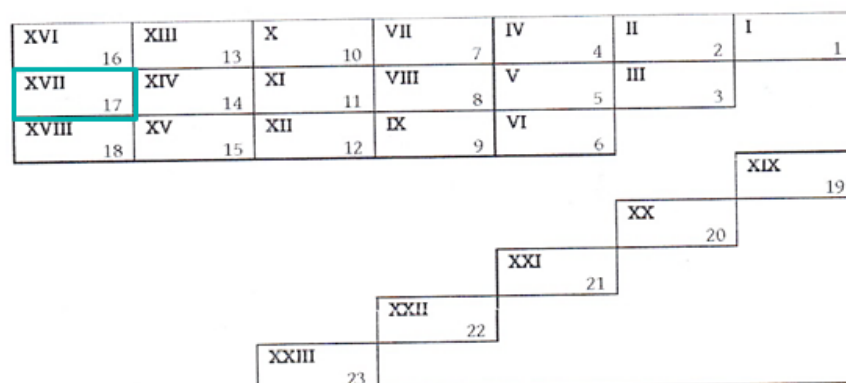


**Map 8.9 Location of the Saka haumavarga in the contexts of their southern neighbours (Friedman, 2016)**

### 8.5.2.2 Historical background

The history of the Saka haumvarga (cf. Map 8.5.3) had its origin in what is today southern Russia. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century (BCE), the Saka haumavarga moved in a south-eastern direction and was assimilated into the local populations. At the same time, other Scythian tribes moved in a more south-westerly direction and infiltrated Media and Assyria (Tourovets, 2008:352).

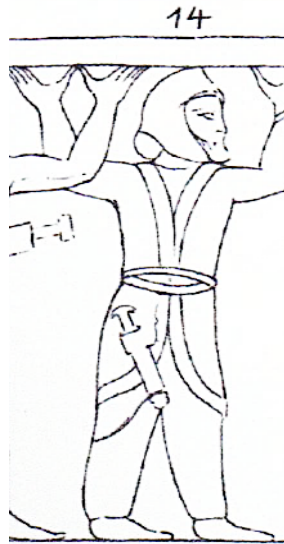
### 8.5.2.3 Position of the Chorasmians, Sogdians, and Saka haumavarga in the procession



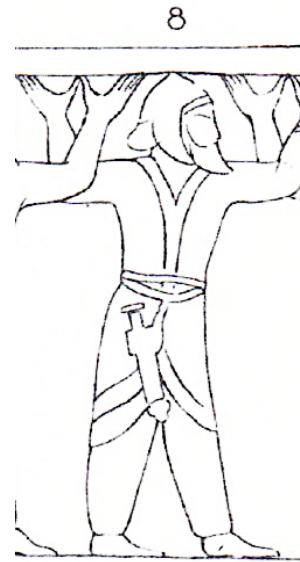
**Fig. 8.11 The position of Problem Group XVII in the diagram of the delegations on the reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadana (Tourovets, 2008:347)**

#### 8.5.2.4 Total reading of the Sogdians, Chorasmians, and Saka haumavarga

A total reading was done for the Sogdians in the previous chapter (cf. 7.5). The visual material for the Chorasmians and the Saka haumavarga are the line drawings of the throne bearers of Darius' tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam along with figures that are still in fairly good condition to make identification possible (cf. Figs. 8.12.1 & 8.12.2).



**Fig. 8.11.1 Chorasmian (Walser, 1966: Falttafel 1)**



**Fig. 8.11.2 Saka haumavarga (Walser, 1966: Falttafel 1)**







The lack of visual material for the Saka haumavarga makes it impossible to do a total reading of this delegation. The only certainty for these figures can be found among the throne bearers on the façades of the royal tombs of the Achaemenid kings at Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis. Here, most of them are identified by the relevant caption.

Both are wearing caps with a small point and ear flaps. Their clothes also correspond – a V-necked, three-quarter, long-sleeved cut-away jacket tied by a double belt. An *akinakes* is tied to the lower half of the belt and to the right leg.

The trousers go down to the shoes.

The arrangement of human figures and animals in the designated space was already done for the Sogdians (cf. 7.5), however, this could not be illustrated for the Chorasmians and Saka haumavarga because no material was available. For the same reason, the latter two groups could not be analysed in detail. One can, however, compare their heads and lower body parts from the line drawings available (cf. Table 8.8).

**Table 8.8 A comparison of the heads and lower body parts of the Sogdians, Chorasmians, and the Saka haumavarga**

	Sogdian (Walser,1966:Falttafel 1)	Chorasmian (Walser, 1966:Falttafel 1)	Saka haumavarga (Walser, 1966:Falttafel 1)
<b>Head</b>			
<b>Lower body parts</b>			

### 8.5.3 Conclusion for Problem Group XVII

From Map 8.8, it is clear that the Saka haumavarga's neighbours included the Chorasmians and the Sogdians. There is a strong possibility of cultural exchange. If clothing was a criterium used in the identification of these three groups, there was no reason why they should not be grouped as one instead of three different entities. The similarities are clear in Table 8.8. The only difference seen in the clothing is the position of the bump under the cap. This difference is so small that it does not prevent the researcher from grouping them as one. It also assumes that one is dealing with accurate drawings. One wonders whether the undamaged reliefs would have given the same identification result.

## 8.6 PROBLEM GROUP XIX: THRACIANS, SKUDRIANS, AND SAKA PARADRYA.

In an analysis of Problem Group XIX, the identification of the members of the group again becomes a problem. It is apparent that the majority of the different scholars cited in Table 8.9 identify the group as Thracian/Skudarian, while only two scholars identify them as Saka Paradrya.

**Table 8.9 Identification of Problem Group XIX by nine different scholars**

	<b>XIX</b>
<b>Schmidt 1953</b>	Skudrians?
<b>Barnett 1957</b>	Skudrians
<b>Walser 1966</b>	Skudrians/Thracians
<b>Herzfeld 1968</b>	Saka Paradrya
<b>Wilber 1969</b>	Skudrians
<b>Dandamaev et al. 1994</b>	Thracians
<b>Koch 2001</b>	Thracians
<b>Wiesehöfer 2009</b>	Thracians
<b>Shahbazi 2011</b>	Saka Paradrya

Two important factors may contribute to these different identifications:

- (i) There was a great movement of different tribes, and it is uncertain where specific tribes settled and dominated at specific times and the extent of their borders could not always be determined.
- (ii) The lack of textual sources, except for limited royal inscriptions and secondary Greek authors, enhances the problem.

### 8.6.1 Thrace or Skudra

The table below (Table 8.10) enhances the uncertainties when scholars, in addition to those cited in Table 8.9, tried to differentiate between the identification of Thrace or Skudra.

**Table 8.10 Different identifications (shaded) by different scholars at different times**

Scholar	Date	Thrace	Skudra	Thrace/Skudra
Kent	1953			
Walser	1966			
Roaf	1974			
Tilia	1972			



Schmitt	2000			
Oppermann	2004			
Gropp	2009			

From the available sources, it is ‘difficult to define the term used to denote Thrace’ (Rehm, 2010:152). Apparently, there were two distinct groups of Thracians – European Thracians to the west of the Black Sea and Asiatic Thracians on the southern shore of the Black Sea (Paphlagonia) (Mitchell, 2010). The problem is that it is uncertain which group of Thracians were referred to in the written sources.

Resorting to representations of the group, whether on the royal tombs at Naqsh- i Rustam or the throne bearers on the door jambs at Persepolis, did not solve the problem because the researcher encountered more problems – some of the figures lacked an inscription and/or the figures were so weathered that the inscriptions are no longer visible.

The identification of Skudra as a group or region presented its own problem. Were the Skudrians just one of the many tribes living in Thrace? If this is so – did they live in European Thrace or Asiatic Thrace? Was the wearing of a *petasos* perhaps an indication that they lived in close contact with Greece and therefore were part of European Thrace?

The reference to Skudra appeared only from the time of Darius I (522-486 BCE) onwards. Skudrians were listed as workers, probably as specialists with special skills.<sup>97</sup> This would also place them in European Thrace as a specific tribe residing there.

The discussion remains open as to where the Skudrians were from and what their contribution was to the Achaemenid Empire.

Because of all these uncertainties, the combined Thrace/Skudra identification, as indicated by Kent (1953), Walser (1966), and Schmitt (2000) in Table 8.5.4, will be used in this study.

#### 8.6.1.1 Geographical location

European Thrace was situated in southeast Europe between modern-day Greece and Bulgaria (cf. Map 8.10.1).

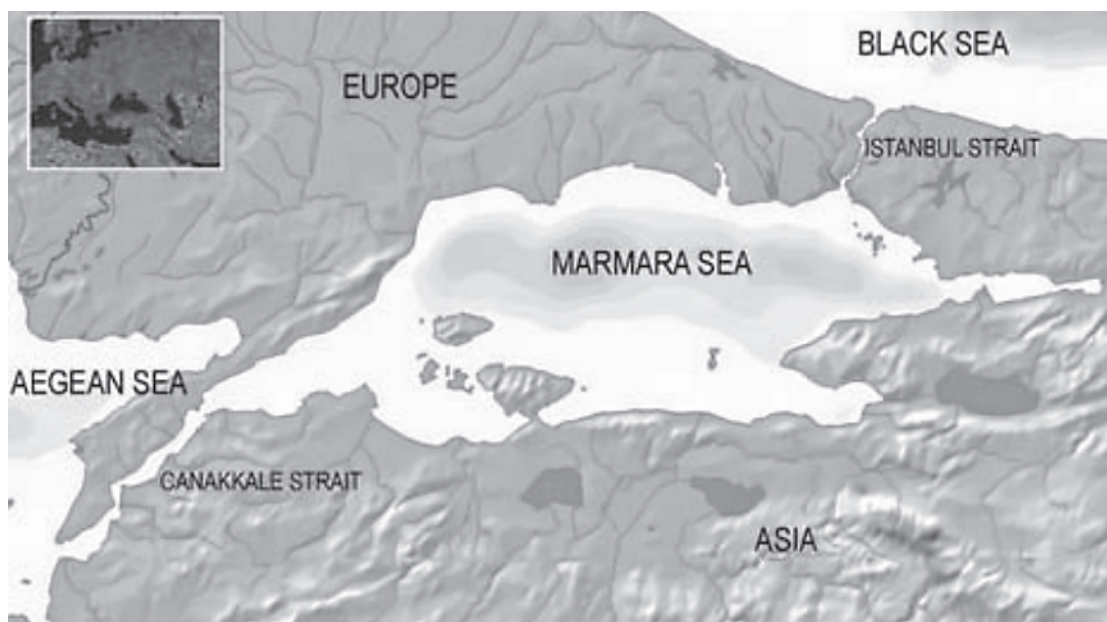
<sup>97</sup> ‘It would be surprising if the inaccessible Paphlagonia region should have produced numerous specialists’ (Rehm, 2010:149).



**Map 8.10.1 The position of the European Skudra (Thrace)**

European Thrace had three natural boundaries – the Balkan Mountain range in the north, the Aegean Sea to the south, and the Black Sea to the east. The long coastal strip augured well for trade by sea (cf. Map 8.10.1).

Because of their sovereignty over the Bosphorous (Istanbul) and the Dardanelles (Canakkale) Strait, the Thracians could also control trade between the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea (Rehm, 2010; cf. Map 8.10.2).



**Map 8.10.2 European Thrace and its coastal borders (Basar, 2010:5)**

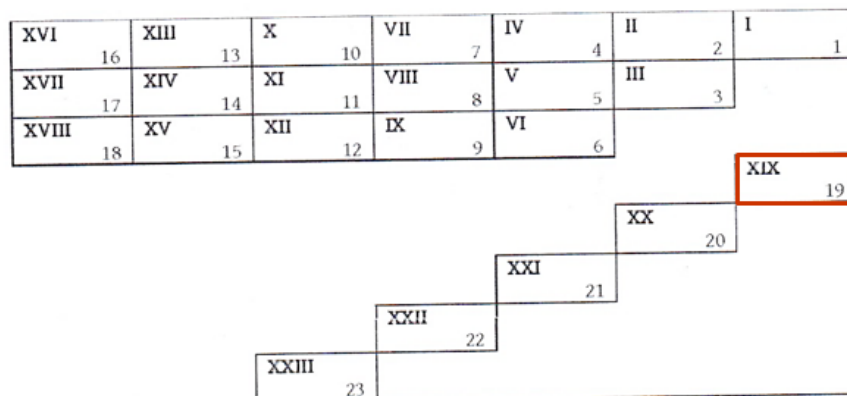
Thrace was also in a strategic position on the crossroads of its powerful neighbours – Persia to the east and Greece to the west. Trade could therefore take place by sea or land.

#### 8.6.1.2 Historical background

In 700 BCE, a group of people (Scythians?) advanced from the Crimea southwards to the Median, Assyrian, and Phrygian kingdoms. Some settled in the northern Anatolian Mountains. They were accepted by the Medes and Achaemenids as an independent state (Gropp, 2009:337) and today are referred to as the Asiatic Thracians. They were conquered during Darius' Scythian campaign to the west in 513/512 BCE. According to Herodotus (IV, 89), the size of the conquered region of Thrace is not known.

Another group of people, who also advanced from the north, became known as the European Thracians. According to Touroverts (2008:353), the Thracians qualified as 'European Scythians', perhaps because they were culturally close to the Scythian world. Extensive archaeological finds bear witness to this.<sup>98</sup> How long the European Thracians were part of the Achaemenid Empire is 'difficult to establish precisely' (Rehm, 2010:152).

#### 8.6.1.3 The position of the Thracians in the procession



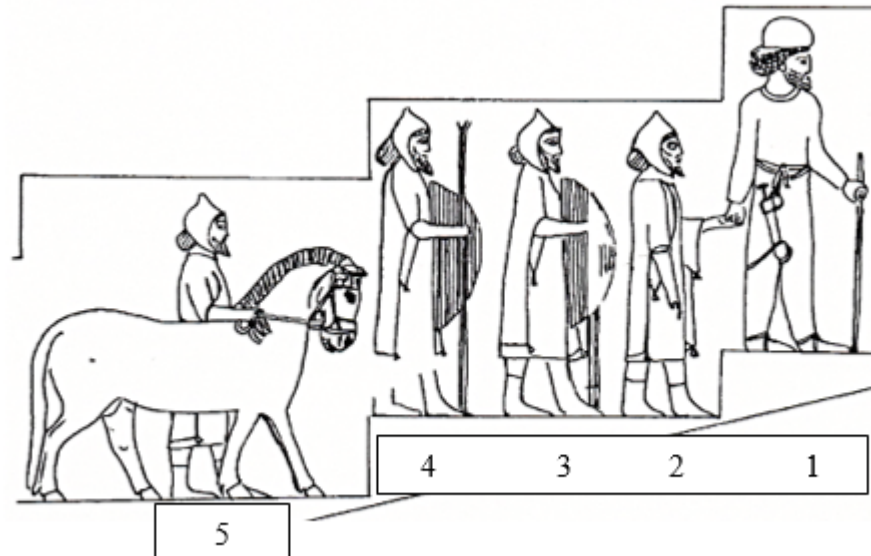
**Fig. 8.12.1 The position of Problem Group XIX in the diagram of the delegations on the reliefs on the eastern façade of the Apadana (Touroverts, 2008:347)**

Problem Group XIX finds its place near the end of the procession (cf. Fig. 8.12.1). According to Touroverts, (2008:354) 'this placement pleads in favour of a location geographically very far from the centre of the empire'. If the numerical placement (19<sup>th</sup>) contributes to the importance of the group within the procession, one comes to the conclusion that Group XIX was not very highly regarded by the planners and designers of the reliefs of the Apadana.

<sup>98</sup> Among the archaeological finds were luxurious, finely crafted metal vessels (Touroverts, 2008:353).

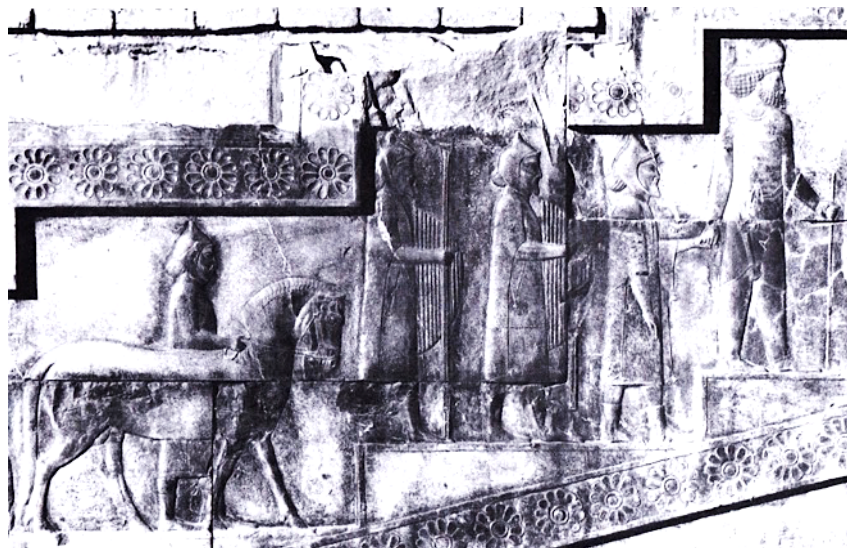
#### 8.6.1.4 Total reading of the Thracian/Skudrian delegation

Number 1, the usher, is slightly bigger than the members of the delegation and is a step higher than Numbers 2 to 4 who, again, occupy the step above Number 5. Number 1 leads Number 2 by the hand. Numbers 3 and 4 carry identical tribute, while Number 5 brings up the rear and leads a horse (cf. Fig. 8.12.2).



**Fig. 8.12.2 Representation of the Thracian delegation (Koch, 2006:63)**

#### 8.6.1.5 Analytical reading of the Thracian/Skudrian group in Problem Group XIX



**Fig. 8.12.3 The Thracian/Skudrian delegation (Walser, 1966: Tafel XVI)**

The current state of this relief on the Apadana at Persepolis (cf. Fig. 8.12.3) hampers the analytical reading. The available line drawing above will serve as an aid in the analysis. The photographs of Walser (1966) will be used along with the line drawings from Koch (2006).



## (a) Thracian/Skudrian usher

## Whole figure

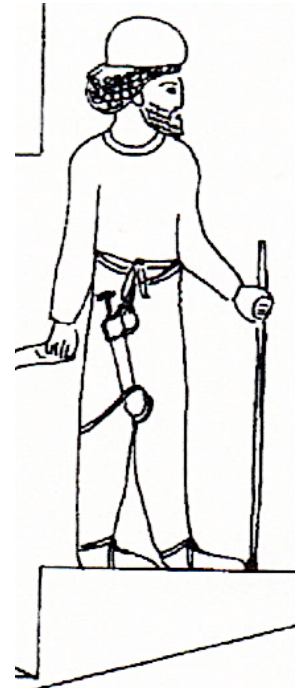


(Walser, 1966: Tafel 74)

Narrow, long-sleeved cut-away coat. Belt around the waist with *akinakes* attached. An *akinakes* is tied to the belt and his right leg.

Long, narrow trousers. Short shoes fastened with straps over the foot.

Usher holds the left hand of the leader of the delegation in his right hand. A staff is in his left hand.



(Koch, 2006:63)

## Head of usher



Domed headdress with a short 'tail' at the back. Curly hair in a bundle at the back, a line of hair on the forehead and a short, curly beard reaching to the ear. A torque as decoration around his neck – probably made of silver or gold.





## (b) Delegation members

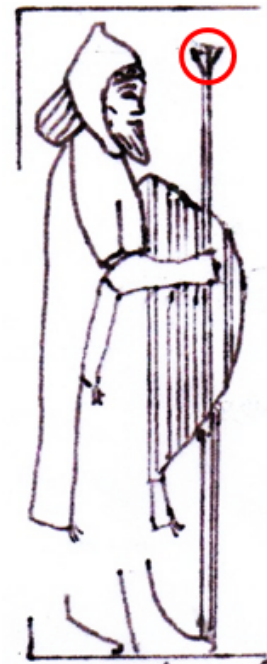
## Whole figures



The detail of the head and headdress is discussed below.

The delegate wears a straight, short-sleeved dress without a belt. A shawl, ending in tassels on the four corners hangs over his left shoulder and down at the back (Roaf, 1974:130).

A hemispherical shield, that appears to be made of rope or wickerwork, is carried in the left hand. The right hand holds two spears. Only the remainders of the blades are visible in the red circle.



## Headdress



(From Walser, 1966: Tafel 74)

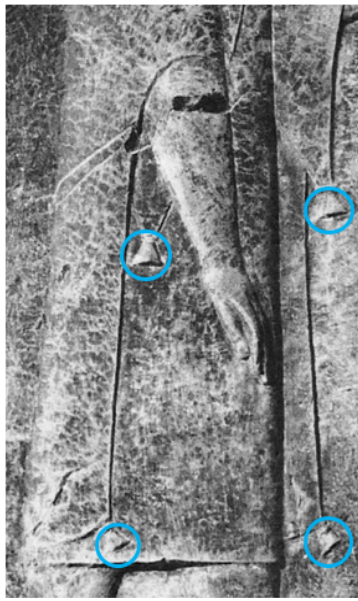
The Thracian/Skudrians wore a cap with earflaps covering the ears and ending below the chin. There was a distinct knob more or less in the middle of the head. The straight hair occurred in a bundle at the back, as a line on the forehead and in a very short, pointed beard.



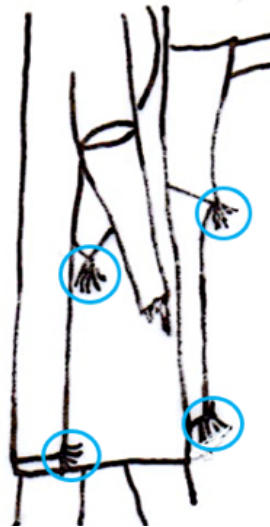
(Roaf, 1974:131)

There is an indication of a moustache on the upper lip. A definite eyebrow and eyelashes are visible. The eye looked almost alive.

## Clothed middle body parts of the leader of the delegation



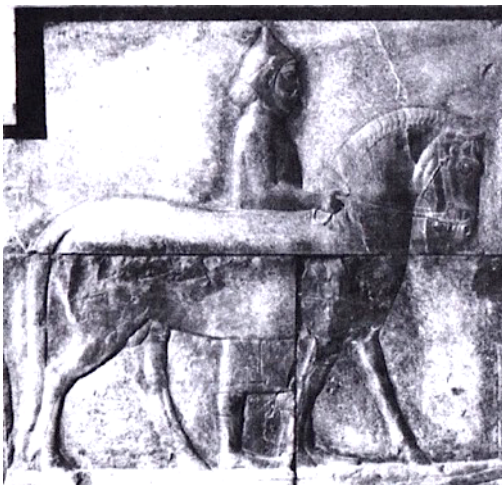
(From Walser, 1966: Plate 74)



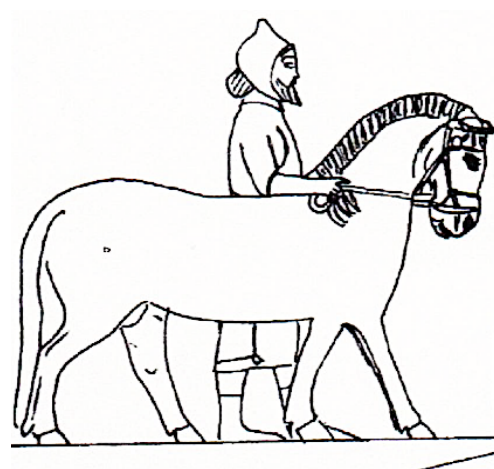
(From Koch, 2006:63)

The straight hem of the robe ends in the mid-calf of the leg. The detail and size of the shawl with tassels at each corner are clearly visible in the blue circle.

## Animals



(From Walser, 1966:Tafel 74)



(From Koch, 2006:63)



Detail of the horse's head

A small horse is led by the last delegate in this group. It has an exceptionally long tail and resembles the horse brought by the Sogdians (cf. Fig. 7.24).

The right arm of the Thracian/Skudrian is bent at the elbow and rests on the back of the animal. The hand has a firm hold on the reign to control the movement of the animal. The mane is executed in fine detail. There is a fringe of hair on the forehead below the well-sculpted ear. The detail of the bit is a true representation (cf. 8.6.1.5(b)).

### 8.6.2 Saka paradrya

All the nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppes, including the Scythians, were called **Saka** by the Persians (Roaf, 1974:118). Many Greek writers, however, referred to these nomadic tribes as **Scythians** (Abetekov & Yusupov, 1999:24). All the nomads who had a similar culture and way of life and who spoke an Iranian language were identified as a specific group. There were frequent migrations of these groups and different tribes/groups successively occupied the same territory. It becomes extremely complex to pinpoint a specific group to a specific area. Therefore, it is difficult to identify a group as **Saka** and even more specifically as **Saka paradrya** (cf. Figs. 8.13.1 & 8.13.2).

Unfortunately, the only representation of the Saka paradrya is found among the throne bearers of Darius and here only one individual of the tribe is shown. A repaired figure on the relief on the tomb of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam and a line drawing of one figure were the only available visual material for the delegation of the Saka paradrya. The paucity of visual images, as well as written documentation make a detailed comparison with the Thracian/Skudrian group almost impossible.

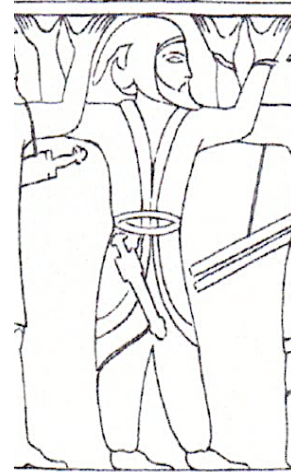
Very little detail is visible on what is left on the relief of the throne bearer identified by Walser (1966) as a representation of a Saka ‘beyond the sea’ - Number 24 of the throne bearers.

The detail of the cap and the neckline of the coat are the most recognisable features.

The cap ends in a long bent, pointed part. Is it bent because of the available space? Had it been upright, it would have tallied with the headdress of the *Saka tigraxauda* who was known as the ‘Saka with the pointed caps’. In their representation as Number 15, the cap was also bent.



**Fig. 8.13.1** Remains of the relief of a Saka paradrya on tomb of Darius I (Naqsh-e Rostam) (Llewellyn-Jones, 2013)



**Fig. 8.13.2** Line drawing of Saka 'jenseits des Meeres' (Walser, 1966: Falttafel 1)

### 8.6.3 Conclusion for Problem Group XIX: Skudrians, Thracians, and Saka paradrya

Up to date, no consensus has been reached about the identity of the people in Problem Group XIX. The problem of Thrace and Skudra was addressed. Different identifications were put forward by different scholars, but no clear-cut agreement has been reached (cf. Table 8.10).

The decision to use Thrace/Skudra instead of one or the other simplified the problem but did not solve it because the Saka paradrya was also a member of Group XIX that had to be dealt with. Unfortunately, with the paucity of visual and textual material for this group of the Saka, no meaningful argument can be voiced about why they should be included in Group XIX.

### 8.7 PROBLEM GROUP XXI: DRANGIANS, CARIANS, MEDIAN TRIBE, AND THE AKUA-FAKA TRIBE

The identification of the different delegations in Problem Group XXI by different scholars, over a fairly long period of time, again posed a problem. One must keep in mind that Zranka ('waterland') was the Old Persian name that was used in Achaemenid inscriptions for the Drangians which was a Greek variant of the name e.g., in the *Bisitun Inscription* (Schmitt, 2011). More than half of the scholars cited in Table 8.11 are in agreement about the identification of this Problem Group as Drangians.

**Table 8.11** Identification of Problem Group XXI by nine different scholars

	XXI
Schmidt 1953	Drangians
Barnett 1957	Drangians
Walser 1966	Median tribe



<b>Herzfeld 1968</b>	Akau-faka. Tribe of the Saka
<b>Wilber 1969</b>	Drangians
<b>Dandamaev et al. 1994</b>	Drangians
<b>Koch 2001</b>	Carians
<b>Wiesehöfer 2009</b>	Median tribe
<b>Shahbazi 2011</b>	Zarangians

### 8.7.1 Drangians

In the representation of the delegation of Fig. 7.4, the Arachosians and the Drangians are grouped together (Koch, 1992:114). However, in Problem Group XXI, the Drangians are represented as an independent group. According to Roaf (1983:115), the ‘people identified as Drangians could in fact represent both the Drangians and the Arachosians’.

#### 8.7.1.1 Geographical location

Drangiana was situated in the south-eastern part of the Achaemenid Empire. It formed a triangle with Aria and Arachosia (cf. Map 8.11.1). The approximate distance between Drangiana and Arachosia is 500 km with a similar distance between Drangiana and Aria. The lowlands of Aria led to Drangiana in the southwest.



**Map 8.11.1 Geographical distribution of Drangiana and its immediate neighbours**

The area where the Drangians settled was a dusty and stormy desert with sand dunes to the southeast. To the northwest of the desert area, the River Etymandrus, the present-day Helmand river, ran through fertile plains that were conducive to agriculture. This plain was almost completely surrounded by mountains of varying heights as can be seen in Map 8.11.2.





**Map 8.11.2 The fertile basin of the Helmand River with its dendritic deltas (mountains on one side and the seasonal lakes on the other) (Yildiz, 2017:7)**

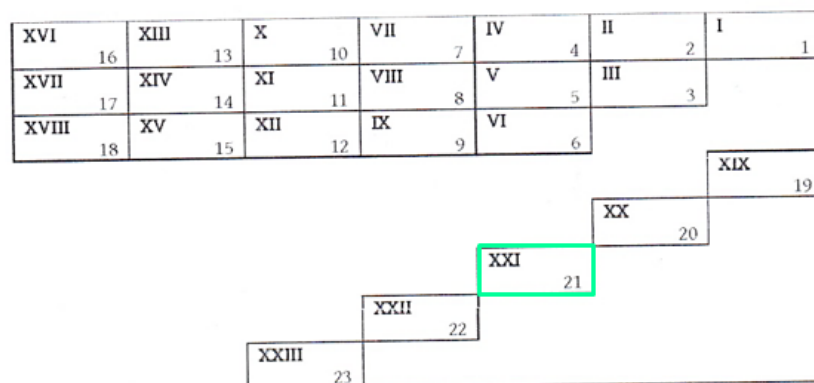
These diverse geographical regions (Borjian, 2018) not only had an influence on the livelihood of the Drangians but also on the clothes they wore and their culture in general.

#### 8.7.1.2 Historical background

There is barely a written source to record the history of the Drangians. It is also impossible to pin down the precise boundaries of the area that they occupied. This problem was enhanced because they were one of the migrating Indo-European tribes. As some of them settled down in a specific area and started farming, it became easier to follow their newly established boundaries.

In the middle the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Cyrus the Great conquered the region of Drangiana and they became part of the Persian Empire. The region then formed an official satrapy under the Persians. In the *Bisitun Inscription* of Darius I, they are called the Zranka (Old Persian).

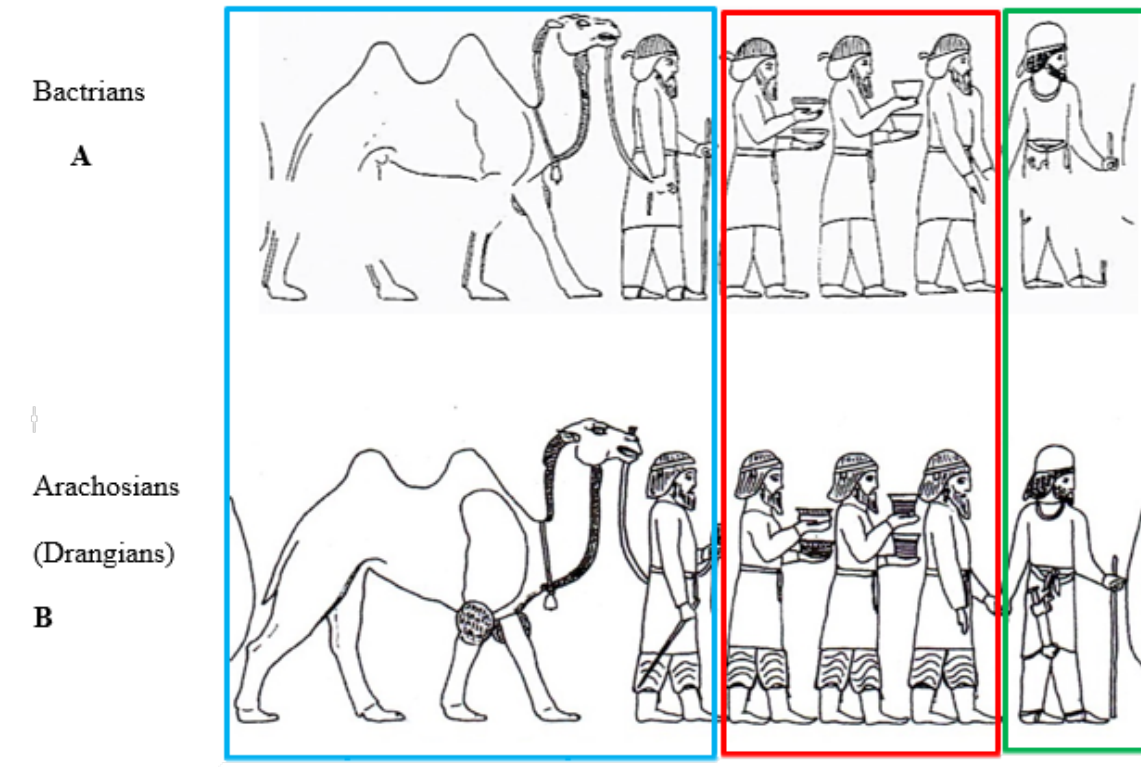
#### 8.7.1.3 Position of Problem Group XXI in the procession



**Fig. 8.14.1 Diagram of the delegations on the eastern façade of the Apadana according to Touroverts (2008:347)**

Group XXI occupies the third last position in the procession (cf. Fig. 8.14.1). They are also squeezed into a space on the ascending stairs. Were they less important because they occupied a space almost at the end of the procession?

*Arrangement of the human figures and the animal (if present) within a designated space*



**Fig. 8.14.2 Comparison between the Bactrian and Arachosian/Drangian delegation**

Here we have a difference of opinion about the identity of the delegations in Problem Group XXI (Fig. 8.14.2). Quite a number of scholars prefer the identification as Bactrian while others prefer Arachosians. The latter is used in conjunction with Drangians by other scholars (cf. Table 8.11).

*Similarities between A and B*

- (i) The usher is in Median dress, holds a staff in the left hand and clasps the left hand of the leader of the delegation in his right hand.
- (ii) Straight hair in all the delegates.
- (iii) The arrangement and number of human figures in each delegation.
- (iv) The delegates all wear a straight, long-sleeved, belted tunic.
- (v) The gifts also correspond – bowls and a Bactrian camel with a bell hanging from the neck and kneepads on the front legs.

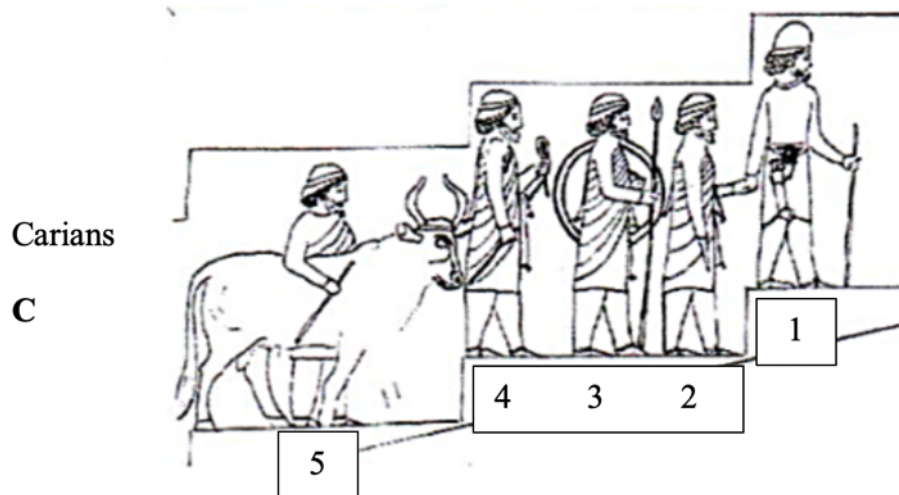
*Differences between A and B*

- (i) Headdress of the delegates differ.
- (ii) Delegates in A wear long, straight trousers touching the short shoes.
- (iii) Delegates in B wear puffy trousers tucked into semi-long boots with slightly turned-up toes.

The similarities between the two groups outnumber the differences by far. This could be a reason for the confusion when it comes to the identification of the groups.

**8.7.2 Carians**

In her line drawing below, Koch (1992:118) identifies this delegation as Carians. If one looks at the approximate distance of 4000 km between Caria and Drangiana, the rationale of grouping them together in one Problem Group remains obscure.



**Fig. 8.14.3 Carian delegation ascending the staircase (Koch, 1992:118)**

If one compares the Carians (C) (cf. Fig. 8.14.3) with A and B, the only *similarities* are the following:

- (i) The usher is dressed in Median dress and holding the hand of the leader of the delegation.
- (ii) Straight trousers down to the short shoes.

*Differences between this delegation and A and B (cf. Table 8.12 & 8.13).*

- (i) The headdress is a fillet.
- (ii) Curly hair in a bundle at the back and a short, curly beard.
- (iii) A long-sleeved, folded knee-high robe.
- (iv) They bring varied gifts: a spear and a shield, a *gorytos*, and a steer.



From the above, it is clear that there is a close relationship between A and B. If one compares these two delegations with C, the differences outnumber the similarities. This raises the question of whether they really belong together?

### 8.7.3 Median tribe

When dealing with the identification of Problem Group XXI in this study, one has to keep in mind that Koch (1992:118) identifies the delegation as Carians in her line drawing, while Wiesehöfer (2009) and Walser (1966) identify the delegation as a Median tribe. Walser (1966) substantiates this identification with photographs in Tafeln 28, 77, and 78 (cf. Figure 8.14.4; Tables 8.12 & 8.13).

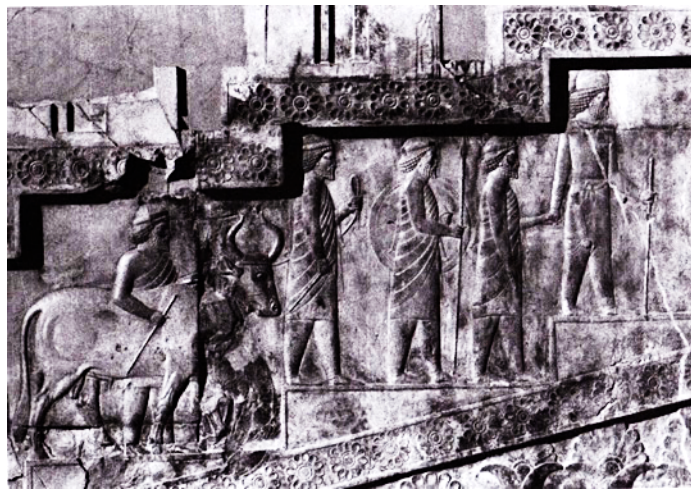





Fig. 8.14.4 Delegation XXI, a Median tribe (Walser, 1966: Tafel 27)

Table 8.12 Comparison of the heads and headdress of the members of the different delegations discussed in Problem Group XXI

Bactrian	Arachosian/ Drangian	Carian/Median tribe
		
(Walser, 1966:Tafel 62)		(Walser, 1966:Tafel 78)

In order to try and find clarity about a probable reason for the identifications in this Problem Group, the heads of the different delegates mentioned are displayed in Table 8.12. The Bactrian is shaded because a large number of scholars see this group as Bactrians. Therefore, a comparison with the actual delegations illustrated in Problem Group XXI could be useful.

**Table 8.12 Similarities and differences discussed in Problem Group XXI**

	<b>Bactrian</b>	<b>Arachosian/ Drangian</b>	<b>Carian/Median tribe</b>
<b>Moustache</b>	Fairly long with distinct curl.	Fairly long with distinct curl.	Fairly long with distinct curl.
<b>Hair on top of the head</b>	Straight and visible.	Straight and visible.	Straight and visible.
<b>Rest of hair</b>	Gathered at the back and covered.	Straight down to the neck.	The straight hair at the back ends in five rows of curls.
<b>Beard</b>	Fairly long with a straight ending. Hair on beard straight.	Fairly long pointed beard. Hair on beard straight.	Short, pointed, curly beard.
<b>Headdress</b>	Probably gathered in fabric with a distinct ‘tail’ at the back.	A simple fillet with the end tucked in on the right-hand side.	A simple fillet. End not visible.
<b>Decoration(s)</b>	Ornate earring.	Ornate earring.	No earring visible.

#### **8.7.4 Akau-faka tribe of the Saka**

This tribe was only mentioned once by Xerxes, in his *Daiva Inscription*, between the Skudra and the Thracians. They were probably residents in the south-eastern mountainous part of the Achaemenid Empire because their name means ‘inhabitants of the land of the high mountains’. See Map 8.5.4 with the mountains in the southeast beyond Bactria.

There is very little information on this tribe and no visual images.

#### **8.7.5 Conclusion for Problem Group XXI: Drangians, Median tribe, Carians, and the Akau-faka tribe of the Saka**

There is again no consensus among scholars about the identity of Group XXI. From the comparison in Fig. 8.7.2, one can see why the Bactrians were brought into the identification process. They show many more similarities with Drangians/Arachosians than with the other members of Group XXI - The Median tribe or Carians.



From Tables 8.12 (images of the heads) and 8.13 (similarities and differences), it is quite clear that very few *similarities* occur, as is indicated by the shaded rows. The similarities in the beards, headdress, and decorations are colour-coded and only occur in two out of three delegations.

Visual and textual information on the Akau-faka tribe of the Saka is virtually non-existent and therefore they were not included in the analyses.

Does this small number of similarities in the different delegations justify the grouping together in Group XXI?

## CHAPTER NINE

### FINAL CONCLUSION

In light of the ongoing problem with the identification of specific delegations in the reliefs on the façades of the Apadana at Persepolis, this study aimed to clarify this problem. The interpretation and analysis of wing A did not present any identification problems. However, this was not the case for the procession of twenty-three cultural groups in wing B. Firstly, it was virtually impossible to determine the reason why specifically twenty-three delegations were selected for the procession of gift-bearers. The spatial area could have been one of the determining factors. The choice for the sequence of the delegations in the procession remains unsatisfactory. The one delegation was not necessarily more important than the other (cf. 7.5.1.3, 8.3.1.2 & 8.6.1.3).

Secondly, there was and still is, no consensus on the identification of eleven of the twenty-three groups (Problem Groups) depicted on wing B of the northern and eastern façades of the Apadana. The identification problem has been the subject matter for many years and of numerous scholars – archaeologists as well as art historians reported on this. The research of the nine scholars used in this study spanned fifty-eight years (cf. 3.5; Tables 7.1, 7.3, 7.5, 7.7, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9 & 8.11).

Thirdly, it is not clear which research method(s) were used by most of these nine scholars to reach a specific identification.

The identification problem escalated further because more than one delegation was mentioned in some of the Problem Groups: Arians (IV, VII); Arachosians (IV, VII, XV); Lydians (VI, XII); Bactrians (XIII, XV); Drangians (XV, XXI); Sogdians (VIII, XVII); Parthians (IV, XV, XIII); and Saka paradrya (XIX, XXI) (cf. Chapters Seven to Eight).

The available knowledge about the physical aspects (geography, topography) and the natural aspects (humans, plants and animals) were taken into account. These aspects played a major role in the existence of certain groups of people who had settled in specific areas. Their clothing and the gifts they brought were also influenced by the area where they settled and how they survived in a specific area.

A detailed comparison of the arrangement of the human figures, as well as their attire and the gifts they brought was of the utmost importance in the research to find an acceptable identification in the problem-solving journey. The meager availability textual material was a contributing and restricting factor in solving the identification problem in the current research project.

Visual images were used as the primary source of information, in an attempt to solve the identification of the Problem Groups. A methodology was devised and applied to find a solution for the incongruities in identifying the Problem Groups (cf. 1.7; Chapter Six). A detailed iconographical analysis was implemented to find similarities and differences and to address the identification problem at hand.

Modern technology like the computer and its zoom-function, resulted in additional information in the search for a solution to the identification problems. Not only can one converse with scholars anywhere in the world, but the zoom function also clarified uncertainties in some of the photographs which in turn led to more exact iconographic analysis. Spectroscopy and laser beams, the electron scanning microscope and colorimetres can also contribute to additional information in the quest to solve the identification of the Problem Groups (cf. 4.2.2.1).

After an extensive iconographic analysis of the eleven Problem Groups and comparisons between the members of the delegations within each group, only ONE of the eleven Problem Groups (XVII) merits a single identification (cf. 8.5). No common denominator was found in all the other delegations in these Groups. In some delegations in the Problem Groups, only two of the three had corresponding characteristics.

Not only were the members in Problem Group XVII (Sogdians, Chorasmians, and Saka haumavarga) geographical neighbours, but they were dressed in similar attire (tunic, trousers, and each carried an *akinakes*) (cf. 7.5.1.6 & 8.5). The only difference, which surfaced during the iconographic analysis, was the position of the bump under the cap (cf. 8.5.3). It is, therefore, justifiable to suggest that the members of Problem Group XVII should share one identification and not three. Perhaps they can be called Sogdians. Geographically they were at the center of the three delegations in this group. The Sogdians also played a very important role in trade to the east and west along the Silk Route. One can only speculate that the neighbouring Chorasmians to the west and the Saka haumavarga to the east, derived benefits from these activities and was influenced by the Sogdians. Whether this merits a single identification for the group remains an open question.

Identifying the remaining ten Problem Groups will continue to present a problem unless a new method of approach and/or new technology are discovered to use as criteria to be applied to the reliefs. New archaeological and textual finds could also shed light on their identification. Until such a time that the incongruities in the identification of the Problem Groups are resolved, the identity of these cultural groups will remain a problem. Therefore, further evidence is needed – perhaps from a location outside Persepolis (Roaf, 1974:91) but still within the Achaemenid Empire.

If one considers the purpose and function of the delegations, which include the Problem Groups, one is confronted by a problem similar to their identification. Different scholars provided different answers in order to solve this problem (cf. Chart 2). Most scholars saw the primary function as an actual ceremony (Nowruz?), followed by administrative, and power and prestige related to more or less equal degrees. The latter was also the case with religious and ritualistic activities but to a lesser degree. Root (1979:23) even voices the possibility that it could have been a ‘metaphorical artistic depiction of an empire’.

The result of the research project was therefore somewhat disappointing, but in any scientific endeavour a negative result is also regarded as a result. In this research project only one of the eleven Problem Groups merits an unanimous identification while the problem remains for the remaining ten Problem Groups. This leaves the field wide open for the application of a different research method in the quest for a solution for the identity of ten of the eleven Problem Groups on the eastern façade of the Apadana at Persepolis.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PFT	Persepolis Fortification Tablets
PFA	Persepolis Fortification Archives
PTT	Persepolis Treasury Tablets
DPe	Terrace inscription, Persepolis (a-j) <sup>99</sup>
DSa	Susa inscriptions (a-z)
DNa	Tomb at Naqsh-I Rostam (a-e)
DB	Darius I, Bisitun Inscription
XPa	Inscriptions from Hamadan (a-e)
XPh	Daiva Inscription
DPg	Achaemenid inscription, Ahuramazdā and the creation of water
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIM	Oriental Institute Museum
ICAANE	International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East.
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AEA	Archéologie de l'empire achéménide
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
RIA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
AMI	Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran

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<sup>99</sup> The first letter in the abbreviation indicates the king, the second the site, and the third letter is added to distinguish the inscriptions of the same ruler on the same site.



## GLOSSARY

Ahuramazda	Sometimes written as Ahura Mazda, can be regarded as ‘The Wise Lord’; the ‘Great god of the Achaemenians and creator of the physical world’. In Zoroastrian religion the deity is often represented as a human figure in profile emerging from a winged disc (Matheson, 1972:29).
<i>Akinakes</i>	A short sword with a characteristic scabbard, the <i>mykes</i> (Herzfeld, 1941:266). There is an Elamite form that is shown with Persian dress (stuck in a waistband) and a Median form that is shown with Median dress (suspended from a belt) (Herzfeld, 1941:266; Curtis & Tallis, 2005:264).
Apadana	The word <i>apadana</i> , which means ‘palace’ or ‘storehouse’, refers to a distinctive type of large hypostyle hall that functioned as an audience hall.
Archaeozoology	The study of the faunal remains from the past.
Artisan	An artisan is a skilled craftsman.
Artist	One who is skilled in creating sculptures.
<i>Baldachin</i>	A canopy made of material; supported on columns or fixed to a roof or wall and placed over an altar, throne or doorway (Brown 2002:175).
Bashlyk	Traditional Persian headdress with a soft, high crown dropping forward. Has a cord hanging down the neck and flaps on either side of the head that could be tied together underneath the chin (Reyes, 1996:26).
Craftsman	A skilled workman.
Cultivation	When its diverse origins are considered, might be defined as assisting the reproduction and hence multiplication of plants (Willcox, 2012:163).
Culture	A particular state or stage of civilisation as in the case of a certain nation or period.
Cuneiform script	The system of writing that developed in southern Mesopotamia.
Domestication	Defined by archaeobotanists as the selection of traits in cultivars. It is seen as a gradual process (Willcox, 2012:164, 169).

Fillet	A headband worn around the head.
Form elements	The basic visual form or motifs of a work including line, shape, colour and texture.
Gift	Something given willingly to someone without payment.
<i>Gorytos</i>	A <i>gorytos</i> was a typical Iranian container for a bow and arrow (Koch, 1992:97)
Hauma	Intoxicating drink of the Saka haumavarga.
Iconographic	The study of the content of images and symbols, as understood by art historians
Iconology	It is an iconography turned interpretive.
Immortals	The Immortals ‘was an elite army which formed an infantry core of ten thousand.’ Their number remained constant because if ‘one became ill or died’ he was replaced by a new member (Shahbazi, 2011:109).
<i>Kandys</i>	A sleeved Median cloak, invariably worn draped over the shoulders with the sleeves hanging unoccupied. The arms are free underneath the coat (Sekunda, 2010:256).
Median dress	Consisted of tight-fitting, knee-length jacket and trousers. Made of leather, half-boots and a round felt hat with an attachment falling on the back.
Mesopotamia	The term designates the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in modern day Iraq and northern Syria.
Mykes	A gold sword cover.
Nowruz	Near eastern practises and rituals relating to the change of seasons during the March equinox.
Palynology	The study of pollen grains, especially as found in archaeology or geological deposits.
Paradise	An enclosed area. The origin of our word ‘paradise’ (Koch, 2006:38; Fakour, 2012:25) has a long history. A few examples are: Old Persian <i>paridaida</i> , Median <i>paridaiza</i> (walled-around, i.e. a walled garden), was transliterated into Greek <i>paradeisoi</i> , then rendered into Latin <i>paradisus</i>

and from there into European languages i.e. French *pardes* and English *paradise*. It also entered Semitic languages, i.e. Akkadian *pardesu* and Hebrew *pardes*.

Perennials	Develop over several years into woody plants: trees, shrubs, or lianas (woody plants that use trees for support) (Tengberg, 2012:182).
Persian robe	A long, flowing, and pleated garment with shoulders and arms.
Petatsos	A flattish, shield-shaped hat.
Phenomenon	An aspect that is known through the senses rather than through intuition or thought.
Procession	The proceeding or moving along in an orderly succession, in a formal or ceremonious manner of a line or a body of persons, animals, or vehicles.
Protome	A representation of the foremost or upper part of an animal (or occasionally a human) used to decorate a piece of sculpture (Lexico.com definition).
Relief	A form of sculpture in which the ornaments or figure are attached to the background from which they stand out to a greater or lesser degree (Avery, 1996:132). In other words, the term is applied to sculpture that projects from a background surface rather than standing freely. According to the degree of projection, reliefs are usually classified as high, medium or low. In the latter the figures project only slightly and no part is entirely detached from the background (Schmitt & Stronach, 2011:145-146).
Tax	A compulsory contribution to state revenue levied by the government.
Tribute	A statement of a gift that is intended to show gratitude, respect, or admiration.
Ziggurat	Ziggurat ('temple-tower') a tower consisting of several stages, on whose uppermost platform existed in all probability a high temple (Roaf, 1990).

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